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File much to blame

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FREDERIC THOMAS BLANCHARD
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HE'S MUCH TO BLAME,

A COMEDY:

IN FIVE ACTS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL,
COVENT GARDEN.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of **HE'S MUCH TO BLAME** is in some small degree indebted to **Le Complaisant**, a comedy attributed to **Monsieur De Ferriol Pont-de-Veyle**, and to the tragedy of **Clavigo** by **Goethe**.

P R O L O G U E.

PR
3515
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PROLOGUES, in these sagacious days, must not
Repeat the story ; and betray the plot :
For deep laid plots we sometimes have, no doubt ;
'Tis pity you can't always find them out :
The secret must be kept ; and not be told :
In this, at least, we beat the bards of old :
We can't endure our meaning you should guess,
And here again we boast complete success :
Cautious lest you the mystery should discover,
We keep you in the dark—till all is over.

Since these important points we must not name,
The title let's discuss: He's much to blame !
To blame? Ay, surely ; very much ! But who ?
The author. Well, that's nothing very new.
And what does blame induce ? Why punishment.
Rashly we sin and leisurely repent.

Lured by that tempting bait a nine nights' bonus,
These scribbling sinners multiply upon us !
Then prologues write ; to whine, cajole, and tickle :
Begging you'll burn the rod you've laid in pickle.
Shielding himself by these and such like arts,
He hopes to hurl with surer aim his darts.
But strike and cry, when we receive a blow,
Is arrant cowardice ! I told him so.
He's mad, who would the field of battle tread ;
Unless he hoped to have a broken head.
There's honor in such scars—he'll win and wear it :
Then give him honor plenty ! Never spare it.
But, should it be your pleasure not to quarrel,
He'll very kindly bear his load of laurel.

Λ 2

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Lord Vibrate,	-	-	Mr. Quick.
Sir George Versatile,	-	-	Mr. Lewis.
Mr. Delaval,	-	-	Mr. Pope.
Dr. Gosterman,	-	-	Mr. Murray.
Thompson,	-	-	Mr. Davenport.
Williams,	-	-	Mr. Clarke.
Harry,	-	-	Mr. Abbot.
Master of the Hotel,	-	-	Mr. Thompson.
Jenkins,	-	-	Mr. Rces.
Waiter,	-	-	Mr. Blurton.
Footman,	-	-	Mr. Curtis.

Lady Vibrate,	-	-	Mrs. Mattocks.
Lady Jane,	-	-	Miss Betterton.
Maria,	-	-	Mrs. Pope.
Lucy,	-	-	Mrs. Gibbs.
Lady Jane's woman,	-	-	Mrs. Norton.

HE'S MUCH TO BLAME,

A COMEDY.

A C T I.

SCENE I.—*Ringing heard. The hall of a hotel, with a spacious stair-case.*

Enter the MASTER and HEAD WAITER meeting.

MASTER.

WHY where are all the fellows, Jenkins?
Don't you hear the bell No. 9?

JENK. Tom is gone up to answer it, sir.

MAS. Who occupies that apartment?

JENK. The handsome youth and girl, that arrived late last night.

MAS. Just as I was going to bed?

JENK. Yes, sir.

MAS. He is quite a boy.

JENK. Razor has never robbed him of a hair.

MAS. Some stripling, perhaps, that has run away with his mother's maid.

JENK. They ordered separate beds.

MAS. Well, see what they want.

JENK. Yes, sir.

MAS. And, harkye, be attentive the moment you hear Lord and Lady Vibrate, or their daughter, stirring.

stirring. People of quality must never be neglected.

JENK. Oh, no, sir—Here is Dr. Gosterman.

[Exit.

SCENE II. *Enter the Doctor.*

MAS. Good morrow, Doctor.

DR. Coot morgen, my tear friend. Is de Fiprate family fisible to see?

MAS. Not yet.

DR. My lordtship und my latyship vas sharge me to be mit dem betime.

MAS. You are a great favourite there, Doctor.

DR. Ya, fair. Dat I am efery vhere.

MAS. You act in a double capacity : physician, and privy counsellor.

DR. Und I am as better in de von as in de oder.

MAS. Why ay, Doctor, you have a smooth pleasant manner.

DR. Ya, fair. Dat is my vay. I mix de syrup mit all my prescription.

MAS. Ay, ay, you are a useful person.

DR. Ya, fair. Dat is my vay. I leave Yarmany und I com at Englandt mit little money, und great cunning in de art, und de science. I shall af de essence, und de cream, und de balsam, und de syrup, und de electric, und de magnetic, und de mineral, und de vegetable, und de air, und de earse, und de sea, und all dat vas subject under my command. So I make de nation benefit, und myself rich. Dat is my vay.

MAS. Yes; you can tickle the guineas into your pocket.

DR. Ya, fair. Dat is my vay.

MAS. You have had many patients?

DR.

DR. Ya, fair. I af cure toufand und toufand !
Dat is my vay.

MAS. And how many have you killed, Doctor ?

DR. Der Teufel, fair ! Kill ? Ven my patient
vas die, dat vas Nature dat vas kill. Ven dey vas
cure, dat vas Dr. Von Gostermans. Dat is my
vay. No, fair ! Dr. Von Gostermans vas kill
himself, dat oder people may live.

MAS. How do you mean kill yourself, Doctor ?

DR. Der Teufel, fair ! Vas I not be call here ?
Vas I not be call dere ? Vas I not be call efery
where ? I af hundred und toufand patient dat die
efery day, till I vas com. So I vas drive to de
city ; und dere I vas meet my beften friend, de
gout, de apoplexy, und de asthma : und den I
vas drive to de inn of court, und de lawyer ; und
dere I vas find more of my beften friend ; de hy-
dropica, de rheumatica, und de paralytica.

MAS. What, Doctor ! The lawyers and inns
of court paralytic ?

DR. Ya, fair.

MAS. I wish they were, with all my soul !

DR. Und den I vas drive und make my reve-
rence mit de lordt, und mit de duke, und mit de
grandee ; und dere I vas meet mosh oder of my
besten friend ; de hypochondrica, de spasmodica,
de hysterica, de marasma, de morbid affection, de
tremor, und de mist before de eye.

MAS. Morbid affections, tremors, and mists
before the eyes, the diseases of the great ?

DR. Ya, fair. Und dey vas grow vorse und
vorse efery day.

MAS. Well, well, they have chofen a skilful
doctor !

DR. Ya, fair. I shall do all deir business, efery
von.

VON. Dat is my vay. I shall af de effence, und de cream, und de balsam, und de fyrup, und de electric, und de magnetic, und de mineral, und de vegetable, und de air, und de earse, und de sea, und all dat vas subject under my command. Dat is my vay. Bote dat is as noting at all. Ah sa, my liebste: you vas my besten friend. You make me acquaint myself mit all de patient dat vas come to your house; and so I vas your besten friend, und I vas gif de physic for yourself, und de physic for your shile, und de physic for your wife.

MAS. For which my wife will never more thank you, Doctor.

DR. No: your wife vas die, und you vas tank me yourself. So now you tell me: Af you any new customer dat vas com?

MAS. Yes: a youth, and a girl that looks like a waiting maid, arrived late last night.

DR. Which it vas a person of grandeur?

MAS. Oh no; wholly unattended.

DR. Ah ah! Which it vas a losing couple, den?

MAS. It seems not.

DR. A poy und a vaiting vomans! Dere shall be someting mystery in dat.

MAS. So I think. Here comes the girl.

DR. Ah ah! Let me do: I shall talk to her. I shall begin by make acquaintance mit her.

SCENE III. *Enter LUCY down the staircase.*

LU. Pray, sir, desire the waiter to make haste with breakfast.

MAS. Here, Jenkins! Breakfast to No. 9! Be quick!

JENK. (*Without*) Yes, sir.

MAS.

A C O M E D Y.

9

MAS. Tea or coffee, madam?

LU. Tea.

DR. How you do, my tear? You vas pretty young frau: fery pretty girl, my tear. Perhaps you vas stranger, my tear?

LU. Perhaps I am.

DR. Ah! Vat is your name, my tear?

LU. That which my Godmother gave me.

DR. Your mastair af made de long journey, my tear.

LU. Has he?

DR. From vat country you com, my tear?

LU. Hem!

DR. I ask, from vat country you com, my tear.

LU. Ask again.

DR. From de town of — Ha!

LU. Ay. How do you call it?

DR. Dat is vat I vant you shall tell?

LU. I see you do.

DR. Your mastair is fery young, my tear.

LU. Thank you, sir.

DR. For vat you tank me?

LU. For your news.

DR. Ah, ah! You are fery vitty und pretty, my tear.

LU. More news. Thank you again.

DR. Vat vas you call de young gentelman's name?

LU. I will ask, and send you word.

DR. How long shall he be stay in town?

LU. Till he goes into the country.

DR. Vat is your capacity, my tear?

LU. Like yours, little enough.

DR. You not understandt me, my tear. Vat is your post, your office?

LU. To answer rude questions.

B

DR. Your mastair is man of family?

LU. Yes. He had a father, and mother, and uncles, and aunts.

DR. Und tey vas tead?

LU. I am not a tombstone.

DR. Com, com, my tear, let you make me answer.

LU. Anan?

Enter WAITER.

WAIT. Here is the breakfast, madam.

LU. Take it up stairs.

[Exeunt Lucy and Waiter up the staircase.]

DR. Der Teufel! A cunning yipsey! She has make me raise my curiosity. (*Calls.*) My tear! My tear! Com pack, my tear! (*Lucy returns.*) Do my compliment to your mastair, und I shall make me mosh happy if I shall af de honeur to make me acquaintance mit him. My name is call Dr. Von Gostermans. I shall af de essence, und de cream, und de balsam, und de syrup, und de electric, und de magnetic, und de mineral, und de vegetable, und de air, und de earse, und de sea, und all dat vas subject under my command. I shall af de best recommendation for de honest Docteur dat vas possible. My Lordt und my Laty Fiprate vas my besten friend. I vas practice mit all de piggest family in de uniferse. Docteur Von Gostermans vas know efery poty; und efery poty vas know Docteur Von Gostermans. You tell him dat, my tear.

LU. Tell him that? I cannot remember half of it! Are you, sir, acquainted with Lord Vibrate's family?

DR.

DR. Ya, my tear. I vas make friendship mit dem more as many year.

LU. And do you know where they are?

MAS. To be sure he does. They are in this—

DR. (*Aside to Master.*) Hush! Silence your tongue! Dere is someting mystery. (*Aloud.*) If you shall make me introduce to your mastair, my tear, I shall tell him efery ting und more as dat, my tear. Vill you, my tear?

LU. I will go and enquire.

DR. Tank you, my tear. You are fery pretty girl, my tear: fery vitty pretty—Ah! You are so tly cunning little yipsey, my tear: Ah ah! [*Exeant.*]

SCENE IV.

A chamber. MARIA in man's clothes with a letter in her hand and walking with anxiety. The Waiter enters and leaves the breakfast. She then reads.

MAR. "Dear sister, The letter I now write is almost needless, for I shall leave Italy and follow it immediately; having at last obtained intelligence of your faithless lover. I am sorry to inform you that, in addition to your unpardonable wrongs, I have my own to vindicate. But I have threatened too long. You have heard of the Earl of Vibrate. He and his family are by this arrived in England; your betrayer accompanies them, and I am in close pursuit. PAUL DELAVAL."

In what will this end? Must they meet? Must they fight? Must one or both of them fall? Oh horror! Shall I be the cause of murder? And whose blood is to be spilled? That of the most generous of brothers, or of the man on whom my first and last affections have been fixed! Is there no safety; no means?

SCENE V. *Enter Lucy.*

LU. Why look here now, madam, you are letting the breakfast grow cold! You have been reading that letter again. I do believe I shall never get you to eat any more. Come now, pray do take some of this French roll; and I'll pour out the tea. Do! Pray do! Pray do!

MAR. I cannot eat, Lucy: I am eaten. Terror and despair are devouring me.

LU. Dear! Dear! What will all this come to? Did not you promise me that, as soon as you had got safe to London in your disguise, you would be better?

MAR. Can it be? My kind, my gentle, my true hearted George!

LU. True hearted! No no, madam, he was never true hearted: or he could not so soon have changed, because his ill fortune changed to good. Every body knows true love never changes.

MAR. What have I done? How have I offended? His caresses, his protestations, his tender endearments! Is then the man in whom my soul was wrapt a vil—Oh!

LU. I declare, madam, if you take on this way, you will break my heart as well as your own. Beside, you forget all the while what you put on this dress and came up to London for.

MAR. Oh no. It was if possible to prevent mischief! Murder!—They have never met. They do not know each other. But how shall I discover Sir George? Of whom shall I enquire?

LU. If you would but eat your breakfast, I do think I could put you in the way.

MAR. You?

LU.

LU. Yes.

MAR. By what means?

LU. Will you eat your breakfast, then?

MAR. I cannot eat. Speak.

LU. Why I have just been talking to an outlandish comical Doctor, that says he is acquainted with Lord Vibrate.

MAR. Indeed! Where is this Doctor?

LU. He is waiting without: for I knew you would wish to speak to him.

MAR. Shew him in immediately.

LU. I'll tell him you are not well; which is but too true; though you must remember, madam, you are a man. So dry your eyes, forget your misfortunes, and, there, cock your hat, a that fashion, and try to swagger a little; or you will be found out. You stand so like a statue, and look so pitiful! Lord, that's not the way! If you are timor-some, and silent, and bashful, nobody on earth will take you for a youth of fortune and fashion.

[Exit.

MAR. (*In revery.*) If they should meet! Heavens! They must not.

SCENE VI. *Re-enter LUCY and DOCTOR.*

LU. My master is not very well: he eats neither breakfast, dinner nor supper, and gets no sleep.

DR. He noder eat, noder drink, noder sleep! Dat is pad! Fery pad! But dat it as noting at all, my tear. Let me do. You shall see presently py and py vat is my vay.

MAR. Your servant, sir.

DR. Sair, I vas your mosh oblishe fery omple fairfant, fair. My name is call Dr. Von Gostermans.

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mans. I shall af de best recommendation for de honest Docteur dat vas possible. I vas practice mit all de piggest family in de uniferse. Docteur Von Gostermans is know efery pody; und efery pody is know Dr. Von Gostermans. De pretty coquine yung frau tell me dat you not fery fell. You not eat, you not drink, you not sleep. Dat is pad! Fery pad! Bote dat is as noting at all. You tell me de diagnostic und de prognostic of all vat you vill ail; und I shall make you prescribe for de anodyne, oder de epipastic, oder de balsamic, oder de narcotic, oder de diaphoretic, oder de expectoratic, oder de restoratif, oder de emulsif, oder de incisif; vvhich is efery ting so shweet und so delectable as all vat is possible.

MAR. Your pardon, sir, but I wish to see you on business of another nature.

DR. Ah ah! Someting of de prifate affair! Dat is coot. I shall be as better for dat as for de oder. I vas know de vorl. I vas know efery pody; und efery pody vas know me. Dat is my vay.

MAR. Perhaps then you happen to know Sir George Versatile?

DR. Oh, Der Teufel, fair! Ya, ya. Sair Shorge is my besten friend. Vvhich it vas fix month dat he vas succeed to his title und estate; und den I vas make acquaintance mit him: dat is my vay.

MAR. But he has been abroad since.

DR. Ya, fair. Ven he vas poor, he vas fall in lose mit fery pretty yung frau. Bote so soon as he vas pecome rith paronet dat vas anoder ting! So
his

his relation und his friend vas sent him to make de Gran tour.

MAR. And he was easily persuaded.

DR. Ya, fair. He vas vat you call fery coot nature : he vas alway comply.

MAR. Compliance with him is more than a weakness : I fear it is a vice.

DR. So he vas make acquaintance mit Lordt und mit Laty Fiprate : und den he vas tink no more of de pretty yung frau, pecaufe he vas fall in lose mit anoder.

MAR. Sir ! Another ! What other ?

DR. Vat you shall ail, fair ? You shange colour.

MAR. With whom has he fallen in love ?

DR. Mit de taughter of Lordt Fiprate.

MAR. With Lady Jane ?

DR. Ya, fair : mit Laty Shane—My cot, fair ! vat you shall ail ? You not make fall in lose yourself mit Laty Shane ?

MAR. No, no—They are no doubt to be married.

DR. My Cot, fair ! you so pale as deaths—My Cot, you shall faint !

LU. Faint, indeed ! (*Aside*) Bear up, madam.

(*Aloud*) My master is too much of a man to faint.

(*Aside*) I'll run for a glafs of water. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E VII.

MAR. The charming Lady Jane—Where is she ?

DR. My Lordt und my Laty Fiprate und my Laty Shane vas all in de house here.

MAR. In this house ?

DR. Ya, fair,

MAR. And is Sir George here, too ?

DR.

DR. He is com und go alway fometime efery tay.

MAR. Are they to be married?

DR. My Cot, fair! you af de ague fit.

MAR. Are they to be married?

DR. My Laty Fiprate vas mosh incline to Sair Shorge; und my Lordt vas fometime mosh incline too; und den he vas fometime not mosh incline; und den he vas doubt; und den he vas do me de honeur to consultate mit me.

MAR. And what is your advice?

DR. My Lordt Fiprate vas my besten friends, und I vas adfice dat he shall do all as vat he please: und Sair Shorge vas my besten friends too, und I vas adfice dat he shall do all as vat he please: und my Laty Fiprate vas petter as my besten friends, und den I vas more adfice dat she shall do all as vat she please.

MAR. But Lady Jane had another lover?

DR. Ya, fair. Mr. Delafal vas make lose mit her. He vas com from de East Indie, und he vas lose her fery mosh; und she vas go mit de family to Italy, und my Laty Fiprate vas make acquaintance mit Sair Shorge, pecause he vas so mosh pleasant und coot humeur, und he say all as vat she say: vlich vas de vay to alway make agréable.

MAR. Could you do me the favor to introduce me to Lady Jane?

DR. Ya, fair. I shall do all as vat shall make agréable. Dat is my vay.

SCENE VIII. *Re-enter Lucy hastily.*

LU. (*Aside to her mistress*) Oh, madam, don't be terrified, but I declare I have spilled almost all the water!

MAR.

MAR. (*Alarmed*) What is the matter?

LU. He is come!

MAR. Who? Sir George?

LU. No: don't be frightened: Mr. Delaval, from abroad.

MAR. My brother! Heavens! Did he see you?

LU. No. I had a glimpse of him, and whisked away just as he stepped out of the postchaise.

MAR. Should he meet me in this disguise, what will he say?

LU. Send away the Doctor, and let us lock ourselves up.

MAR. (*To the Doctor*) I must beg you will excuse me, sir; but it is necessary at present I should be alone. With your permission, I will see you again in the afternoon; and, in the mean time—
(*Gives money*)

DR. Oh, fair! I vas your mosh oblishe fery omple fairfant, fair. I shall make you mosh more fit; und den you shall tell me de diagnostic und de prognostic of all vat you vill ail.

LU. Yes yes, another time.

DR. Und I shall af de essence, und de cream, und de balsam, und de syrup, und de electric, und de magnetic, und de mineral, und de vegetable, und de air, und de earse, und de sea, und all dat vas subject under my command.

LU. You have told us all that before.

DR. Und I shall make you prescribe for de anodyne, oder de epipastic, oder de balsamic, oder de soporific, oder de narcotic, oder de diaphoretic, oder de expectoratic, oder de restoratif, oder de emulsif, oder de incisif, which is efery ting so shweet und del etable as all vat is possible.

C

LU.

LU. (*Aside*) Was ever any thing so provoking?
—Pray, fir, make haste.

DR. You shall make remembrance of Dr. Von Gostermans. I am practice mit all de piggest family in de uniferse. Sair, I vas your mosht oblishefery omple fairfant, fair. (*The Doctor goes off talking, and Lucy locks the door while the scene changes.*)

SCENE IX. *The hall of the hotel.*

DELAVAL, WILLIAMS, MASTER and JENKINS.

DEL. Is the portmanteau safe?

WILL. Yes, fir.

DEL. And the trunks?

WILL. All right.

DEL. Have you paid the postillions?

WILL. Yes, fir.

MASTER. (*To Delaval*) This way if you please, fir. Jenkins!

JENK. Coming, fir.

MAS. Shew the damask room. What will you please to have for breakfast, fir?

DEL. Nothing.

MAS. Sir!

DEL. Any thing.

MAS. Bring tea, coffee, and new laid eggs.

JENK. In a minute, fir.

DEL. (*To Williams*) Observe the directions I gave you. Enquire, immediately, and find if the Vibrate family be in town?

WILL. I will be careful, fir.—Hay?—(*To Delaval going*)—Sir! Sir!

DEL. Well?

WILL. Look! Here comes Lord Vibrate's secretary!

SCENE

SCENE X. *Enter THOMPSON.*

DEL. (*To Thompson*) Mr. Thompson!

THOM. Ah! Mr. Delaval? I am heartily glad to see you in England!

DEL. Thank you, my good friend. But how is this? Where is the family? Where is Lady Jane?

THOM. I thought that would be your question! They are all in this house.

DEL. Indeed!

THOM. I knew, when Lady Jane left Italy, your stay there would be short.

DEL. Ay, ay! The follies and frenzies of the madman are visible to all eyes, except his own.

THOM. I see you are dissatisfied.

DEL. Tortured, till my thoughts and temper are so changed that I am almost as odious to myself as the world is become hateful to me.

THOM. I own, you have some cause.

DEL. Would *my* injuries were all! But there are other and still deeper stabs. It is not yet ten months since I returned from India: my heart how light, my eye how cheerful, and my hand prompt at any commendable act. I could then be moved to joy, and sorrow, and every sympathising passion. Smiles and mock courtesy passed current on me, the word of man and woman was taken on trust, and I lived in the sunshine of an open unsuspecting soul. But I am now otherwise taught. I am changed. My better part is brutalized; and the wrongs that lie rankling here have stripped me of human affections, and made me almost savage.

THOM. What can be said? Patience is the—

DEL. Talk not of patience: I must act. I
C 2 may

may then perhaps enquire whether I have acted rightly? But I must first see Lady Jane, and Lord Vibrate.

THOM. Shall I inform his lordship of your arrival?

DEL. By no means. Having injured, he may wish not to see me: and I would not afford him time to invent excuses, and avoid giving me a hearing. Though my wrongs must be endured, they shall be told.

THOM. I own, they are great.

DEL. Those that you know are heavy; yet, severe as the struggle would be, 'tis possible they might be hushed to rest: but there are others which blood only can obliterate! which can only sleep in death! Such is the road I must travel. Not long since nature was jocund, the azure heavens were bright, and pleasure was in every path; but now darkness, fathomless gulphs, guilty terrors, and all the dreadful phantoms of meditated desolation, lie before me. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

LORD VIBRATE *at a table with a quarto volume reading.*

LORD VIBRATE.

THE ancient sceptics doubted of every thing, affirmed nothing, and kept the judgment always in suspense: All things, said they, are equally indifferent, uncertain, and indeterminate. The mind is never to assent to any thing; that it may never be astonished, or disturbed, but enjoy
a perfect

a perfect calm. (*Rises with important wisdom in his looks*) Such were the maxims of Pyrrho, and his disciples; those renowned sages of antiquity! Well! And such too have been my maxims, practically. Al! my life have I been wavering, uncertain, and indeterminate! A sagacious sceptic without knowing it; and as it were by instinct! It was but lately I discovered what a wise man I am! And yet it seems to me as if I were scarcely half wise enough, for I am told that I am to doubt of every thing which I find rather difficult. For example: that my wife Lady Vibrate is an extravagant rackety rantipole woman of fashion, can I doubt that? No. That she squanders my money, disturbs my peace, and contradicts for contradiction's sake, can I doubt that? No. Then have I not a daughter to marry, a law suit to begin, and a thousand perplexing affairs so that I do not know which way to turn? Why all this appears true to me: but the sceptics teach that appearances deceive, and that nothing is certain. I may be Lord Vibrate, or I may be the Grand Turk. These doctrines are prodigiously deep. (*Considers*) But I must think of something else just now. I have a thousand things to do, and know as little where to begin as where they will end. Ay! All is uncertainty! (*Rings*) Harry! Edward!

S C E N E II. *Enter* JENKINS.

JENK. Did your lordship call?

LORD V. Where are my servants? I want some of my plagues.

JENK. They are ready at hand, my lord, Here is your lordship's secretary.

SCENE III.

Enter MR. THOMPSON, and exit JENKINS.

LORD V. What is the reason, Mr. Thompson, that nobody waits? Here am I, fretting myself to a mummy for the good of my family, while every body about me is as drowsy as the court of common council after dinner! Have they taken laudanum? Are they in a lethargy? Are they all dead?

THOM. If they were, your lordship would have the goodness to raise them.

LORD V. Don't you know how many people I have to see, and places I have to go to?

THOM. No, my lord.

LORD V. Why, did not I tell you?

THOM. Yes, my lord.

LORD V. Then how can you say you don't know?

THOM. Because I venture to presume, my lord, you do not know yourself.

LORD V. I am distracted with doubts. Harry!

SCENE IV. *Enter Footman.*

HAR. Did your lordship call?

LORD V. Where are you all? What are you about? I think you have lived long enough with me to know my way.

HAR. Yes, my lord: we know it very well.

LORD V. If you are not more attentive, I'll discharge you every one.

HAR. Oh no: (*Half aside*) you will not do that.

LORD V. What are you muttering, firrah?

HAR. Only, my lord, that we know your way.

LORD V.

LORD V. Order the coach at eleven.

HAR. Yes, my lord.

LORD V. No. Order it at one.

HAR. Yes, my lord.

LORD V. Come back ! Order it in ten minutes, and remember I am not at home. Come back ! Don't order it at all.

HAR. Must visitors be admitted ?

LORD V. Yes. No. I cannot tell. I will consider. Be within call. Thompson !

[*Exit Footman.*]

THOM. My lord.

LORD V. Step to that picture dealer. I will have the Guido. Yet——'tis a great sum ! No—— It is a master piece. I must have it. Why don't you go ?

THOM. The picture is sold, my lord.

LORD V. Sold ? Gone ? Have I lost it ? This is always the way ! I am for ever disappointed. Harry !

Re-enter Footman.

HAR. My lord.

LORD V. Did you go with the message to the stable keeper, last night ?

HAR. Yes, my lord.

LORD V. Let me know when he comes.

HAR. He will come no more, my lord.

LORD V. Come no more ?

HAR. No, my lord.

LORD V. Why so ?

HAR. He says you never know your own mind, my lord.

LORD V. Insolent fellow !

HAR. Dr. Gosterman is below.

LORD V. Admit him. Stay. I cannot see him yet. In half an hour. In ten minutes. By and by.
[Exit Footman.]

SCENE V.

LORD V. I must not waste my time in these trifles. I must attend to this law business. I wish I could determine. What am I to do, Thompson?

THOM. In what, my lord?

LORD V. The affair of the ejection. If I once embroil myself in law, there will be no end; and if I do not the consequences are still worse.

THOM. Then they are bad indeed, my lord.

LORD V. 'Tis strange that I can come to no resolution, on this subject.

THOM. (*Aside.*) Nor on any other.

LORD V. I must decide this very day, or the time will be elapsed.

THOM. A lawyer I should suppose, my lord, would give you the best advice.

LORD V. How? Are you mad, Thompson? A lawyer give good advice!

THOM. The present possessor has held the estate twenty years.

LORD V. Not till tomorrow. I have time still to make my claim. How shall I act?—Shall I never leave this hotel?—Has the builder been here?

THOM. No, my lord.

LORD V. I can get nothing done. My whole life long I have been distracted with the multiplicity of my affairs.

THOM. And so I am afraid, my lord, you always will be.

LORD

LORD V. Why so, sir?

THOM. Because your lordship undertakes so much, and does so little.

LORD V. So he has not been here?

THOM. No, my lord.

LORD V. Nor the lawyers?

THOM. No, my lord.

LORD V. Nor my steward?

THOM. No, my lord.

LORD V. Nor Sir George?

THOM. No, my lord.

LORD V. Where is Lady Vibrate? Where is Lady Jane? Are they all in their graves? Have none of them shewn signs of life yet?

THOM. Not one. Your lordship is the only person in the family who begin your miseries so soon in a morning.

LORD V. The crosses and cares that prey upon me are enough to make any man on earth miserable.

THOM. Pardon me, my lord, but if you would care less both yourself and your servants would sleep the more. My lady cares for nothing; and she can sleep, when she is in bed, and sing and dance and laugh at your lordship's cares and fears, when she is up.

LORD V. She will drive me mad!

THOM. (*Going.*) Ah! Here she is, as it were for the purpose.

LORD V. Tell Harry to admit the Doctor—No. Not just yet. Yes. In five minutes. I don't know when.

[*Exit Thompson.*]

SCENE VI. *Enter* LADY VIBRATE.

LADY V. Upon my honor, my lord, you are the most insupportable person imaginable. You vociferate worse than the man who calls when my carriage stops the way. Is any body dying? Is the house on fire? Is the world at an end?

LORD V. By the life your ladyship leads, I should suppose it is pretty near.

LADY V. You always give me such shocking head-achs of a morning.

LORD V. You always give me such shocking heart-achs of an evening.

LADY V. Did not I send to you last night, to request your lordship would not disturb me?

LORD V. It has been your ladyship's amusement to disturb me all your life.

LADY V. Your lordship knows I love amusement.

LORD V. I have not slept a wink since.

LADY V. You had slept quite enough before. Pray how long are we to remain in this hotel? Your lordship should remember, it is degrading for a man of rank to doze away life, in the stile of a colonel reduced to half pay.

LORD V. Your ladyship should remember, it is degrading for a woman of rank to riot away life, and reduce her creditors to live without pay.

LADY V. Pshaw! That is the old story.

LORD V. But it is a very true story. It is a great misfortune that persons so opposite should pair.

LADY V. A terrible one indeed. I am all gaiety and good humour: you are all turmoil and lamentation. I sing, laugh, and welcome pleasure
wherever

wherever I find it : you take your lantern to look for misery, which the sun itself cannot discover.

LORD V. I am overwhelmed by crosses and vexations; and you participate in none of them.

LADY V. No. Heaven be praised !

LORD V. Will you attend to me, my lady, for half an hour ?

LADY V. Mercy ! Attend to you for half an hour ! You, my lord, may think proper to be as miserable as Job : but I am not Job's wife.

LORD V. I insist, Lady Vibrate, on a serious answer. How ought I to act ? What should I do, in this law affair ?

LADY V. I cannot tell what you ought to do : but I know what you will do.

LORD V. Do you ? What ?

LADY V. Nothing.

LORD V. The recovery of this property would enable me to give my daughter a portion suitable to her rank. If it is lost, she will be almost destitute of fortune.

LADY V. You should have thought of that before, my lord.

LORD V. Before ? Why I have thought of nothing else for years. I have asked every body's advice.

LADY V. And followed nobody's.

LORD V. It shall be so. The ejectment shall be served : proceedings shall commence.

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha !

LORD V. I say, they shall. I am determined.

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha ! I know you, my lord.

LORD V. You know ! I say they shall, if it be only to prove that you know nothing of the matter.

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha! A pleasant motive!
But even that will not be strong enough.

LORD V. But it will, my lady.

LADY V. But it won't, my lord.

SCENE VII. *Enter DR. GOSTERMAN.*

LORD V. I say it will, my lady.

LADY V. I say it won't, my lord.

DR. Coot morgen, to my coot lordt und my coot laty.

LORD V. For heaven's sake, Doctor, stop my lady's tongue.

LADY V. For heaven's sake, Doctor, give my lord a quieting draught.

DR. I shall do efery ting as vat you desire, my coot lordt und my coot laty.

LORD V. Can nothing silence you, Lady Vibrate? Shall I never have a quiet hearing? I want to talk with you and the Doctor on a thousand things.

LADY V. Yes; you wish to have all the talk to yourself.

LORD V. On the marriage of our daughter.

LADY V. Oh, with all my heart. A marriage at least begins with music, feasting, and dancing. So say on.

LORD V. I am not yet determined in favor of Sir George.

LADY V. But I am. (*While they speak, the Doctor gesticulates in favor of each.*)

LORD V. Mr Delaval is an unobjectionable gentleman; and he was the first suitor.

LADY V. Sir George can sing; Sir George can dance; Sir George has air, grace, fashion, and fortune.

LORD V.

LORD V. Pshaw! His best qualities are prudence, and attention to his own concerns. Ask the Doctor.

DR. He has fery mosh prudence, my coot lordt.

LADY V. Ha, ha ha! I vow, Sir George is the most airy, thoughtless, pleasant person living: except myself.

DR. Ya; Sair Shorge is fery mosh pleasant: und my latyship is fery mosh more pleasant.

LORD V. Absurd. His humour is calm, cold, and serious.

DR. Fery serious, inteet.

LADY V. Whimsical, animated, delightful.

DR. Fery animate, fery telightful, upon my vordt.

LORD V. I never met a more discreet sensible man in my life.

LADY V. True: for he thinks of nothing but his pleasures.

LORD V. His affairs, you mean.

LADY V. I tell you, my lord, he is exactly what I wish: the very soul of levity, whim, and laughter.

LORD V. I tell you, my lady, he is exactly like myself: prudent, and full of sage hesitation. He considers before he acts. Does he not, Doctor?

DR. Dat vas all yust as vat you say, my coot lordt.

LADY V. He never considers at all. Does he, Doctor?

DR. Dat vas all yust as vat you say, my coot laty.

LORD V. How so? We cannot both be right.

DR. You shall please to make me parton, my coot lordt. Sair Shorge vas all as vat you say; und

und all as vat my coot laty say. Mit my laty, he vas merry: mit my lordt, he vas sad. Mit my laty, he vas laugh, und vas sing, und vas tance: und he vas make melancholy, und misery, und vas do all dat shall make agréable mit my lordt.

LORD V. Is he so variable?

DR. Ya, he vas fery mosh comply: fery mosh coot humeur. He vas alway make agréable. Bote vas my lordtship und my latyship know dat Mr. Delafal vas com from Italy?

LADY V. Come where? To England?

DR. He vas in de house below. I vas see und speak mit his falet.

LORD V. In this hotel?

DR. He vas yust arrife, und vas demandt dat he shall see my lordtship; oder my latyship.

LADY V. I am very sorry he is here. He is a dun of the most disagreeable kind, and shall not see me; and I hope, my lord, you will no longer permit his addreeses to Lady Jane. My word is given to Sir George. Come with me, Doctor.

[*Exeunt Lady Vibrate and Doctor.*]

SCENE VIII. *Enter MR. DELAVAL.*

DEL. Pardon me, my lord, if I intrude with too little ceremony. Something I hope will be allowed to a mind much disturbed, and a heart deeply wounded and impatient to ease its pangs.

LORD V. Which way deeply wounded, Mr. Delaval?

DEL. Can your lordship ask? Was it not with your permission I paid my addreeses to Lady Jane? And was the ardour of my affection or the extent of my hopes unknown?

LORD

LORD V. Why, I did permit, and I did not. I had my doubts.

DEL. My visits were daily, their purpose was declared, and I should imagine I spoke more respectfully to say that you permitted than that you connived at them.

LORD V. True : but still I had my doubts.

DEL. Those doubts have stung me to the soul ; and I could wish you had expressed them more decidedly.

LORD V. Impossible ! Doubts here, doubts there, doubts every where. No rational man can be decided, on any point whatever. My doubts are my continual plagues : my whole life is consumed by them,

DEL. It appears, my lord, you have conquered them on one subject.

LORD V. Ay indeed ! I wish to heaven I had ! What subject is that ?

DEL. You have affianced your daughter to Sir George Versatile.

LORD V. Humph !—Yes ; and no. I have ; and I have not. I cannot determine. Sir George is a prudent man, his estate is large, and the Versatiles are an ancient race. But your family is ancient, you are prudent, and the wealth left by your uncle is at least equal. What can I say ? What can I do ? I don't know which to take nor which to refuse. I am everlastingly in these difficulties. I am harassed night and day by them : they are the night mare, they sit upon my bosom, oppress me, suffocate me. I cannot act. I cannot move.

DEL. This, my lord, may be an apology to yourself, but the consequence to me is misery. Your daughter lived in my heart : with her I had promised

misfed myself ages of happiness; and had cherished a passion, impatient perhaps, but, ardent and pure as her own thoughts. This passion your conduct authorized. My fortune, my life, my soul, were devoted to her. Mine was no light or wanton dalliance; nor did I expect a light and wanton conduct from the noble family of which your lordship is the head.

LORD V. What do you mean, Mr. Delaval? I told you I was undecided; and so I am still. My lady, you know, was never much your friend. Sir George is her favourite.

DEL. And is Lady Jane equally changeable?

LORD V. I don't know. She is *my* daughter; and, judging by myself, I should suppose she is perplexed, and doubtful. She never, I believe, declared in your favour?

DEL. Not expressly, my lord. She referred me to time and you. 'Tis true I flattered myself her affections were wholly mine. Should she prefer Sir George, or any other man, be my feelings what they will, I then am silenced. My heart could not be satisfied with cold compliance. Oh no! 'Tis of a different stamp. I am told she is not at home. I hope however she will not have the cruelty to deny me a last interview: till when I take my leave. Only suffer me to remark that, had you discovered in me any secret vice, any defects dangerous to the happiness of the woman I adore, you then were justified in your present conduct. But, if you have no such accusation to prefer, I must do my feelings the violence to declare I cannot but think it highly unworthy of a man of honor.

[Exit.

SCENE

SCENE IX.

LORD V. Mr. Delaval—Insolent!—Highly unworthy of a man of honor?—I will challenge him.—He shall find whether I am a man of honor, or no. I will challenge him. Harry!

SCENE X. *Enter Footman.*

HAR. My lord.

LORD V. Run. Tell that Mr. Delaval—Hold—Yes, fly! Tell him—Stay. Get me pen ink and paper—I will teach him to insult—No. I will not do him the honor to write. Order him back.

HAR. Order who, my lord?

LORD V. He shall give me satisfaction. In that at least I am determined. He shall give—And yet what is satisfaction? Is it to be run through the body? Shot through the head? A man may then indeed be said to be satisfied—I had forgotten my doubts on duelling—Tell my lady I wish to speak to her. No—

HAR. She is here, my lord. [Exit.]

SCENE XI. *Enter LADY VIBRATE and the DOCTOR.*

LADY V. What is the matter, my lord? You seem to be even in a worse humour than usual!

LORD V. Mr. Delaval has treated me disrespectfully!

LADY V. Have not I a thousand times told you he is a disagreeable impertinent person?

LORD V. Why, God forgive me, but I really find myself of your ladyship's opinion! 'Tis a thing I believe that never happened before!

LADY V. And a thing I believe that will never
E happen

happen again ! I hope, my lord, you are now determined in favor of Sir George ?

LORD V. Positively. Finally. I pledge my honor.

LADY V. You hear, Doctor.

DR. Ya, my coot laty ; I vas hear.

LORD V. I say, I pledge my honor. I authorise you, my lady, to deliver that message to the baronet : and, that I may not have time to begin to doubt, I will instantly be gone. *[Exit.*

S C E N E XII.

LADY V. This is fortunate !

DR. Oh, fery mosh fortunate ! fery mosh !

LADY V. Had Mr. Delaval married my daughter, we should have had a continual sermon on reason, common sense, and good order ! And these and such like antediluvian notions must have been introduced to our family.

DR. Ah, dat shall be pad ! fery pad inteet, my coot laty !

LADY V. Now that Sir George is the man, the danger is over.

DR. Dat is creat plessing !

LADY V. But what think you are my daughter's thoughts ? I fear she has a kind of esteem for Delaval. He was her first lover.

DR. Ya ; she vas fery mosh esteem Mr. Delaval, my coot laty.

LADY V. But I observe she listens with great pleasure to the gay prattle of Sir George.

DR. Oh ! fery creat inteet, my coot laty.

LADY V. We must second the rising passion ; for we must get rid of that solemn sir.

DR. Dat vas all yust as vat you say, my coot laty.

LADY

LADY V. Go to her, Doctor; convince her how intolerable it will be to have a husband whom she cannot quarrel with, nor reproach. Paint in the most lively colours the stupid life she must lead, with so reasonable a man.

DR. I shall do ebery ting as vat shall make agréable, my coot laty. Dat is my vay. My laty, I vas your mosht oblishe fery omple fairfant,
my laty. [Exeunt.

END OF ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE I. *The hall of the hotel.* WILLIAMS and HARRY. LUCY *speaking to the master of the hotel.*

WILL.

ALL you say is very true, Mr. Harry. Our masters suppose we have neither sense nor feeling; yet exact every thing that requires the five senses in perfection. They expect we should know their meaning before they open their lips; yet won't allow we have common understanding.

HAR. More shame for 'em. I warrant for all that we can game, run in debt, get in drink, and be as proud and domineering as they for their lives.

WILL. Yes, yes: let them but change places and they would soon find we could rise to their vices, and they could sink to ours, with all the ease imaginable.

E 2

HAR.

HAR. They have no such notion though, Mr. Williams.

WILL. That is their vanity, Mr. Harry. I have lived with Mr. Delaval ever since he returned from India; and, though he is a good——(*Sees Lucy*) Hay! Surely—it must be her! Do you know that young woman, Mr. Harry?

HAR. No: but I have heard a strange story about her.

WILL. Ay!—It is!—What?—I am sure it is Lucy!—What strange story have you heard?

HAR. Why that she came here late last night with a young gentleman, now above, pretending to be his waiting maid.

WILL. With a gentleman!—(*Aside*) Oh the jilt! Waiting maid to a man? I never heard of such a thing!

HAR. Nor any body else.

WILL. (*Aside*) The deceitful huffey!

HAR. (*Hears a bell*) That's my lord's bell. I told you, he is never easy. I must go.

WILL. (*Aside*) I am glad of it—By all means, Mr. Harry. Good-day— [*Exit Harry.*]

SCENE II.

WILL. Run away with a gentleman! Oh!

LU. (*Coming forward*) I declare, there is Mr. Williams.

WILL. (*Aside*) What a fool was I to believe she loved me!

LU. (*Aside*) How my heart beats! Dear, dear! I could wish to speak to him—but then if any harm should come of it?

WILL. (*Aside*) She shall not escape me!

LU.

LU. (*Aside*) I should like to ask him how he does—But I must not betray my dear lady. (*Going*)

WILL. (*Placing himself in her way*) I beg pardon, ma'am.

LU. (*Aside*) Does not he know me?

WILL. I thought I had seen you before; but I find I am mistaken!

LU. (*Aside*) What does he mean?

WILL. You are very like a young woman I once knew.

LU. (*Aside*) How angry he looks!

WILL. But she was a modest pretty behaved person; and not an arrant jilt.

LU. Who is a jilt, Mr. Williams?

WILL. One Lucy Langford, that I courted and promised to marry: but I know better, now.

LU. You do, Mr. Williams?

WILL. I do, madam.

LU. It is very well, Mr. Williams! It is very well! Pray let me go about my business!

WILL. Oh, to be sure! I have no right to stop you.

LU. You have no right to speak to me as you do, Mr. Williams.

WILL. No, no; ha, ha, ha! I dare say, I have not.

LU. (*Her passions rising*) No, you have not; and so I beg you will let me pass. My mistress—I mean—

WILL. Ay, ay! You mean, your master.

LU. Do I, sir? Well! Since you please to think so—so be it.

WILL. All the servants know it is a man! Would you deny it?

LU. I deny nothing, Mr. Williams; and, if you

you are minded to make this an excuse for being as treacherous as the rest of your sex, (*Keeping down her jobs*) you are very welcome, Mr. Williams—I shall neither die—nor cry, at parting.

WILL. I dare say not. The young gentleman above stairs will comfort you.

LU. (*Bursts into tears*) It is a base false story. I have no young gentleman above stairs, nor below stairs neither, to comfort me! and you ought to know me better.

WILL. Did you or did you not come here late last night?

LU. What of that?

WILL. With a young gentleman?

LU. No. Yes. Don't ask me such questions.

WILL. No! You are ashamed to answer them.

SCENE III. MARIA *from the staircase.*

MAR. (*Calls*) Lucy!

LU. Ma'am! Sir! Coming, sir!

WILL. There! There! I will see what sort of a spark it is, however.

LU. (*Struggling*) Be quiet, then! Keep away! You shan't!

MAR. (*Descending*) What is the matter? Who is molesting you?

LU. (*To Maria*) Go back, sir! Go back!

WILL. I will see, I am determined!

SCENE IV. DELAVAL *from a room door.*

DEL. Williams!

WILL. I tell you, I will. (*Looking at Maria*) Hay! Bless me!

MAR.

MAR. Why, Lucy ! Mr. Williams !

WILL. My young lady, as I live !

DEL. Why do not you answer, Williams ?

WILL. Coming, sir !

MAR. Mercy ! It is my brother's voice ! What shall I do ?

LU. Hide your face with your handkerchief, ma'am. Pull down your hat.

MAR. Pray do not betray me, Mr. Williams.

LU. If you do, I will never speak to you as long as I have breath to draw.

WILL. How betray ?

LU. Don't say you know us. Mind ! Not for the world !

[Exeunt Maria and Lucy up the staircase.]

S C E N E V.

DEL. What is it you are about, Williams ?

WILL. Nothing, sir.

DEL. What do you mean by nothing ? Whom were you wrangling with ?

WILL. Me, sir ? Wrangling, sir ?

DEL. Why are you so confused ?

WILL. Why, sir, I—I committed a small mistake. I was asking—asking after a gentleman that that that proved not to be a gentleman—that is—not not *the* gentleman that I supposed.

DEL. Why did you not come back with your message ?—Have you learnt the address of Sir George ?

WILL. Yes, sir : he lives in Upper Grosvenor-street ; his name on the door.

DEL. Well, be in the way.—The day shall not pass before I see him. My own wrongs I could forgive. He it seems is preferred ; and perhaps
I have

40 HE'S MUCH TO BLAME:

I have no right to complain: But for his injuries to my sister he shall render me a dear account.

[Exit.

WILL. What can be the reason of Miss Delaval's disguise?

LU. (*Peeping from the top of the stairs*) Hft! Hft! Mr. Williams!

WILL. Is it you?—Oh! now I shall know.

[Exit up the staircase.

S C E N E VI.

LADY VIBRATE and LADY JANE.

LADY V. Really, daughter, I cannot understand you.

LADY J. No wonder, madam; for I do not half understand myself.

LADY V. Is it possible you can hesitate? The good humour and complaisance of Sir George might captivate any woman.

LADY J. They are very engaging: but they are dangerous.

LADY V. Which way?

LADY J. His character is too pliant. If others are merry, so is he: if they are sad, he is the same. Their joys and sorrows play upon his countenance: but, though they may slightly graze, they do not penetrate his heart. Even while he relieves, he scarcely feels them.

LADY V. Pshaw! He is a delightful man.

LADY J. I grant he does his utmost. But it is a folly to be the slave even of an endeavour to please.

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha! Upon my honor, you are a whimsical young lady! Afraid of marrying

a man because of his assiduous endeavours to please ! As if that were a husband's failing ! You can prefer no such accusation against Mr. Delaval.

LADY J. I own he is of a very different character. Firm and inflexible, he imagines he makes virtue his rule, and reason his guide.

LADY V. Firm indeed ? No, no : ferocious, obstinate, perverse. Sir George tries to be agreeable, and is successful : Mr. Delaval has no fear of offending, and does not miss his aim.

LADY J. Heaven help us ! We all have faults and follies enough.

LADY V. Mr. Delaval never was approved by me ; and this morning he has insulted your father.

LADY J. Insulted ! How do you mean, madam ? Mr. Delaval is abroad ! Has he written ?

LADY V. No. He is here.

LADY J. Here ! And has he not thought proper to let me know of his arrival ?

LADY V. No, no. The haughty gentleman has only thought proper to reproach Lord Vibrate for admitting the pretensions of Sir George. He is too proud to endure a competitor.

LADY J. Indeed ! Such pride is the very way to insure his competitor success. Insulted my father !

LADY V. I will leave you to judge how deeply when I tell you that, fluctuating and undecided as Lord Vibrate always is, he was so offended that he pledged his honor in favor of Sir George.

LADY J. Insult my father, and not deign to let me know of his arrival !

LADY V. I hope, when Sir George comes, you will admit him.

LADY J. Certainly, madam ; certainly.

LADY V. And that Mr. Delaval will be denied.

LADY J. It seems I need give myself no concern about that : the gentleman will not even take the trouble to send up his name.

LADY V. I am glad you feel it properly.

LADY J. Pardon me, madam. I will not condescend to feel it, in the least. It shall not affect me ; no not for a moment. I had indeed conceived a very different opinion of Mr. Delaval. I am glad I have discovered my error, before it is too late. I could not have believed it possible ! But it shall not disturb me. It shall give me no uneasiness. I will keep myself perfectly cool, and unconcerned, and—ungenerous, unfeeling man !

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VII.

LADY V. She is delightfully piqued, and Sir George will succeed !

SIR G. (*Without*) Are the ladies above ?

FOOT. (*Without*) Yes, sir.

LADY V. I hear him ! The very sound of his voice inspires mirth.

Enter SIR GEORGE.

SIR G. Ah, my dear Lady !

LADY V. I am infinitely glad to see you, Sir George ! You are come at a lucky moment.

SIR G. Is then my fate decided ?

LADY V. It is ! It is !

SIR G. Happy tidings !

LADY V. But first tell me—

SIR G. Any thing ! Every thing ! Speak !

LADY V. Are you not of my opinion ?

SIR G.

SIR G. To be sure I am ! What is it ?

LADY V. That pleasure is the business of life.

SIR G. Oh, beyond all doubt !

LADY V. That inspecting accounts—

SIR G. Is vulgar drudgery !

LADY V. And looking after our affairs—

SIR G. A vile loss of time !

LADY V. That care in the face denotes—

SIR G. The owner a fool !

LADY V. And that sorrow is a very ridiculous thing !

SIR G. Fit only to excite laughter !

LADY V. Why then, Sir George, I am your friend.

SIR G. Ten thousand thousand thanks ! But, what says my lord ?

LADY V. Would you believe it ? He consents, has pledged his honor, and sent the message by me.

SIR G. Rapture ! Enchantment !

LADY V. Yes. The reign of pleasure is about to begin !

SIR G. Light, free, and fantastic ; dancing an eternal round !

LADY V. No domestic troubles !

SIR G. No grave looks !

LADY V. No serious thoughts !

SIR G. We will never think at all !

LADY V. No cares, no frowns !

SIR G. None, none, by heavens, none ! It shall be spring and sunshine all the year !

LADY V. Then our appearance in public !

SIR G. Splendid ! Dazzling !—Driving to the opera !

LADY V. Dressing for Ranelagh !

SIR G. A phaeton to-day !

LADY V. A curricie to-morrow !

SIR G. Dash over the downs of Piccadilly, descend the heights of St. James's, make the tour of Pall-mall, coast Whitehall—

LADY V. Back again to Bond-street—

SIR G. Scour the squares, thunder at the doors !

LADY V. How do you do ? How do you do ?
How do you do ?

SIR G. And away we rattle, till stone walls are but gliding shadows, and the whole world a Galantty show.

LADY V. You are a charming man, Sir George ! and Lady Jane is yours.

SIR G. My dear lady, your words inspire me ! I am all air, spirit, soul ! I tread the milky way, and step upon the stars !

LADY V. But you must not, before the marriage, talk thus to Lord Vibrate. Silly man ! He and you will never agree.

SIR G. Oh yes, but we shall. I—I—I like his humour !

LADY V. Do you ?

SIR G. Prodigiously ! Whenever I am in his company, I am as grave as Good Friday.

LADY V. Indeed !

SIR G. He is full of sage reflection. So am I. Doubtful of every thing. So am I. Anxious for the present, provident for the future. So am I. Overflowing with prudential maxims ; sententious, sentimental, and solemn. So am I.

LADY V. You sentimental !

SIR G. As grace before meat, in the mouth of an alderman,

LADY V. You solemn!

SIR G. As the black patch on a judge's wig.

LADY V. I must tell you, Sir George, I hate sentiment.

SIR G. Oh! So do I!

LADY V. Solemnity is all a farce.

SIR G. And those that act it buffoons. I know it!

LADY V. I love mirth, pleasantry—

SIR G. Humour, whim, wit, feasting, revelry, shout, song, dance, and joke. So do I! So do I! So do I!

LADY V. The very mention of duties and cares makes me splenetic.

SIR G. Curse catch duties! I hate them! Give me life, the wide world, the fair fun, and the free air!

LADY V. I say, give me midnight, the rattling of chariot wheels, and the lighted flambeau!

SIR G. Ay! A rout! A crash of coaches! A lane of footmen! A blazing stair-case! A squeeze through the anti-chamber! Card tables! Wax lights! Patent lamps! Bath stoves and suffocation! Oh lord! Oh lord!

LADY V. Exquisite! You are a delightful man!

SIR G. Am I?

LADY V. You enter perfectly into all my ideas!

SIR G. Do I?

LADY V. And describe them even better than I myself can.

SIR G. Oh, my dear lady!

LADY V. Yes, you do.

SIR G. No, no.

LADY V. But then, ha, ha, ha! That you should

should be able to fall in with my lord's absurdities so readily!

SIR G. Nothing more easy. I have one infallible rule to please all tempers. I learnt it of our friend the Doctor.

LADY V. Sure! What is that?

SIR G. I prove that every body is always in the right.

LADY V. Prove my husband to be in the right! Do if you can.

SIR G. My lord loves to be restless, and doubtful, and distressed: he delights in teasing and tormenting himself; and why should I interrupt his pleasures?

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha! Very true.

SIR G. I fall in with his humour. I shew him how rational it is, afford him new arguments for discontent, and encourage him to be miserable.

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha! Oh you malicious divle!

SIR G. My dear lady, you mistake. I do it from pure compassion. It makes him happy. Every child delights in the squeaking of its own trumpet; and shall I have the cruelty to break the toy? A well bred person is cautious never to contradict. It is become a very essential requisite to say Ay, and No, in the most complying manner possible.

LADY V. Ah, Sir George, you are one of the dear inimitable few.

SIR G. Only a copy of your charming self.

LADY V. You and I must totally reform our stupid family. Amusement shall be our perpetual occupation.

SIR G. Day and night.

LADY V.

LADY V. We will commence with your marriage. It shall be splendid!

SIR G. A feast, a concert, a ball! The whole town shall ring with it!

LADY V. I hate a private wedding. A small select party is my aversion.

SIR G. Oh, nothing is so insipid! Pleasure cannot be calm.

LADY V. I wish to be seen, and heard—

SIR G. And talked of, and paragraphed, and praised, and blamed, and admired, and envied, and laughed at, and imitated!

LADY V. I live but in a crowd.

SIR G. Give me hurry, noise, embarrassment—

LADY V. Confusion, disorder—

SIR G. Tumult, tempest, uproar, elbowing, squeezing, pressing, pushing, squeaking, squalling, fainting!

LADY V. Exquisite! Transporting!

SIR G. You remember I receive masks this evening?

LADY V. Can I forget?

SIR G. You will be there?

LADY V. There? Ay! Though I should come in my coffin.

SIR G. Ha, ha, ha! An excellent idea! I never yet saw a mask in the character of a Memento mori.

LADY V. Ah! Turn about, and you will see a Memento mori without a mask!

SIR G. What, my lord?

LORD V. (*Without*) I cannot tell. I will consider, and send an answer.

LADY V. Here he comes, to interrupt our delightful dreams: a very antidote to mirth and pleasure.

pleasure. He will give you a full dose of the distempers. But you must stay and speak to him. Remember, his honor is pledged: insist upon that. I pity but cannot relieve you. *[Exit.]*

SCENE VIII. *Enter LORD VIBRATE.*

LORD V. I have been too sudden. I ought not to have pledged my honor. This is the consequence of hasty determination: of not doubting before we decide. Shall I never correct myself of that fault? *(Sees Sir George. They look full at each other till Sir George catches the same dismal kind of countenance)* Ah, Sir George! Here am I, brim full of anxiety and turmoil!

SIR G. Alas! Man was born to trouble.

LORD V. Perplexed on every side; thwarted in every plan: no domestic comfort, no friend to grieve with me, no creature to share my miseries.

SIR G. Melancholy case!

LORD V. One crossing me, another blaming me, and my wife driving me mad!

SIR G. Distressing situation!

LORD V. My cares laughed at, my vigilance mocked, my sufferings insulted! And why? Because I am cautious! because I doubt! because I am provident! What is man without money?

SIR G. A fountain without water.

LORD V. A clock without a dial.

SIR G. *(Warming and becoming rapid as he proceeds)* What is it that buys respect, and honor, and power, and privilege, and houses, and lands, and wit, and beauty, and learning, and lords, and commons, and—

LORD V.

LORD V. Why money!—Then the manners of this dissipated age!

SIR G. They are truly shocking! They, they, they are absurd, ridiculous, odious, abominable.

LORD V. And to what do they lead?

SIR G. To every thing that is horrid! To loss of peace, loss of property, loss of principle, loss of respect, bankruptcy, ruin, contempt, disease, and death!

LORD V. (*Aside*) Yes, yes: he's the man! I do not think I repent—Heaven be praised, Sir George, you are a man of understanding; an economist. You will regulate your family and affairs to my heart's content.

SIR G. Oh! it shall be my study! my daily practice! my duty! my delight!

LORD V. You make me happy—and yet I cannot but wonder, being so rational a man, how you and my lady should agree so well.

SIR G. Dear, my lord, why so? Women are the most manageable good creatures upon earth.

LORD V. Women good?

SIR G. Indubitably: when they are pleased.

LORD V. So they say is the devil.

SIR G. The sweet angels deserve to be humoured. Their smiles are so enchanting! And, should they frown, who can be angry when we know the dear wayward fyrens will only look the more bewitching, as soon as they are out of their pouts? It is so delightful to see the Sun breaking from behind a cloud.

LORD V. Pshaw! When a woman begins to grow old—

SIR G. Hush! The Sun—The Sun never
G grows

grows old. I grant you that formerly there used to be old women: but there are none now!

LORD V. Then you think me a fool for being wretched at my wife's thoughtlessness, caprice, and impertinence?

SIR G. No, I don't. Every body tells us that wives were born to be the plague of their husbands.

LORD V. And mine is the greatest of plagues!

SIR G. What is a wife's duty? To obey her lord and master. 'Tis her marriage promise, and the law binds her to it. She is the minister of his pleasures, the handmaid of his wants, his goods, his chattels, his vendible property.

LORD V. Ay: we find the husband may take the wife to market in a halter.

SIR G. In which I should hope he would afterward hang himself!

LORD V. My lady thinks of nothing but reveling, and racketing, and turning the world upside down!

SIR G. 'Tis a great pity.

LORD V. Her tongue is my torment.

SIR G. The perpetual motion! It never ceases!

LORD V. Then how can you like her company?

SIR G. She is not *my* wife.

LORD V. No, or you would not be such good friends. Did she say any thing concerning the marriage?

SIR G. Oh, yes. She delivered your lordship's kind message.

LORD V. What, that I had pledged my honor?

SIR G. Irrevocably.

LORD V.

LORD V. I was very rash. Hasty resolutions bring long repentance—She insists that the nuptials shall be public!

SIR G. Does she, indeed?

LORD V. For my part, I hate any display of vanity.

SIR G. It is extremely ridiculous! What would our ostentation, pomp, and magnificence be, but advertising ourselves to the world as fools and coxcombs?

LORD V. Is that a rational use of money?

SIR G. Should it not be applied to relieve the aged, comfort the poor, succour the distressed—

LORD V. What?

SIR G. Reward merit, encourage industry, and promote the public good?

LORD V. Promote a farce!

SIR G. Very true: the public good is a farce!

LORD V. The true use of money is to defend our rights——

SIR G. Revenge our wrongs, purchase for the present, provide for the future, secure power, buy friends, bid defiance to enemies, and lead the world in a string!

LORD V. Ay! Now you talk sense. So, if I should consent, the wedding shall be private.

SIR G. Calm: tranquil.

LORD V. No feasting.

SIR G. No dancing: no music: no pantomime pleasures: but all silent, serene, pure, and undisturbed.

LORD V. We will just invite a select party.

SIR G. A chosen few.

LORD V. None but our real and sincere friends.

SIR G. And then we shall be sure the house will hold them.

SCENE IX. *Enter HARRY.*

HAR. My lord, the builder desires to know if you will see him?

LORD V. I am coming. I will be with him in five minutes.

HAR. He says, he can stay no longer.

LORD V. Then let him go. I will be with him presently.

HAR. The lawyers have sent word they are waiting for your lordship, at Counsellor Demur's chambers.

LORD V. Very well. There let them wait. The law is slow, and every man ought to be slow who is going to law. Come with me, Sir George. I have some papers to consult you upon.

HAR. The tradespeople too are below.

LORD V. Thus it is! I am eternally besieged! I never have a moment to myself!

HAR. This is the tenth time they have been here, by your lordship's own appointment.

LORD V. What of that?

HAR. They are become quite surly. They all abuse me; and some of them don't spare your lordship.

LORD V. Do you hear, Sir George?

SIR G. Oh shocking! Your tradespeople are a sad unreasonable set. You cannot convince them that, if we were to keep our appointments, be punctual in our payments, and know what we do want and what we do not, we should no longer be persons of fashion.

SCENE X. *Enter THOMPSON.*

THOM. I am just come from the lawyers, my lord. The courts are sitting, their clients waiting,
and,

and, if your lordship do not go immediately, they will be gone.

LORD V. Very true; and this last opportunity of serving an ejectment will be lost. I have a thousand things to attend to. Would you be kind enough, Sir George, to go and——Hold—No—I don't know what to do! The estate is valuable: but law is damnable. I may lose the cause: it may cost even more than it is worth. Writs of error! Brought into chancery! Carried up to the Lords!

SIR G. Then the stupidity of juries, the fictions of law, the chicanery of lawyers, their tricking, twisting, turning, lying, wrangling, browbeating, cajoling!

LORD V. Their frauds, collusions, perjuries, robberies!

SIR G. Ay! Detinue, replevin, plea, imparlance, replication, rejoinder, rebutter, surrejoinder, surrebutter, demurrer—

LORD V. Take breath! We ought both to demur: for it is the devil's dance, and both Plaintiff and Defendant are obliged to pay the piper.

[*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT III.

A C T

A C T IV.

SCENE I. *The apartments of LORD VIBRATE.*LADY JANE, *her* WOMAN, *the* DOCTOR, *and*
FOOTMAN.LADY J. (*To Footman.*)TELL the young gentleman I wait his pleasure. (*Exit Footman.*) It is very singular! Men, I believe, do not often travel attended by waiting maids!

DR. Dat is de mystery, my Laty Shane.

LADY J. What can he want to say to me?

DR. Dat is de more mystery, my Laty Shane. He vas fery mosh young, und fery mosh handsome, und he vas fery mosh make fall in-lofe mit you, my Laty Shane.

LADY J. Nonsense!

DR. My Laty Shane vas so full of de beauty dat you vas make sharm efery pody, my Laty Shane! Und as your name vas make mention, my Laty Shane, he vas all so pale as deaths!

LADY J. (*Aside to her woman.*) You are sure, you say, Mr. Delaval made enquiries; and sent up his name?WOM. (*To Lady Jane.*) Law, my lady! Could you think he would not? I saw him before ten o'clock; just as you sent me where I was kept so long: and, goodness! Had you beheld what a taking he was in! I warrant you, my lady, he asked a hundred and a hundred questions in a breath; and all about you!

LADY J. Well, go now where I desired you.

WOM. Yes, my lady. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II. *Footman returns introducing*
MARIA. *Salute.*MAR. (*Aside*) Why do I tremble thus?LADY J. (*To Doctor*) What a charming countenance!

DR. Oh, fery mosh sharming!

LADY J. How prepossessing his appearance!

DR. Ya: he vas fery mosh possess.

Re-enter Footman.

FOOT. Sir George has sent this domino and mask, to know if they meet your ladyship's approbation.

LADY J. Ha, ha, ha! Italian refinement, copied after some Venetian Cicisbeo. Put them down.

MAR. (*Aside. Regarding the domino and mask.*) Here his presents, and here his affections are now directed! How shall I support the scene?

LADY J. You wish, sir, to speak to me.

MAR. (*Faltering*) Embarrassed by the—liberty—I have taken—

LADY J. Let me request you to wave all apology, and tell me which way I can oblige or serve you.

MAR. You are acquainted with Sir George—I—you—Pray pardon me. I am overcome. My spirits are—so agitated—

LADY J. (*Eagerly reaching a chair.*) Sit down, sir. You are unwell! Bless me! Doctor!DR. (*To Lady Jane significantly.*) I vas tell my Latty Shane vat it vas—Here, fair, you smell mit dat elixir; und I shall make your neck bandt tie loofe, und— (*Going to loosen her neckcloth.*)MAR. (*Alarmed and putting him away.*) Pray forbear!

56 HE'S MUCH TO BLAME:

DR. (*Aside. Imitating the heaving of the bosom.*)
Ah ha ! Der Teufel ! He vas a vomans !

LADY J. Are you better ?

MAR. A moment's air. (*Goes to the window.*)

DR. (*Aside*) Dat vas de someting mystery !

MAR. (*To Lady Jane.*) If you would indulge me a few minutes in private ?

LADY J. By all means—Doctor—(*Whispers.*)

DR. Ya, ya, my Laty Shane, I vas unterstandt ; und I vas do efery ting as vat shall make agréable. Dat is my vay——Sair, I vas your mosh oblishe fery omple fairfant, fair. I vas unterstandt. My Laty Shane, I vas your mosh oblishe fery omple fairfant, my Laty Shane—(*Aside*) Ah ha ! [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

LADY J. Take courage, fir.

MAR. I am unequal to the task. This disguise fits ill upon me.

LADY J. What disguise ?

MAR. I am not what I seem. I—

LADY J. Speak !

MAR. I am a woman.

LADY J. Heavens !

MAR. Distressed——

LADY J. By poverty ?

MAR. Oh no. I come to claim your counsel.

LADY J. In what way ?

MAR. To prevent mischief. The shedding of blood.

LADY J. The shedding of blood ?

SIR G. (*Without,*) I will be with you again presently, my lady.

MAR. Mercy ! It is Sir George ! What shall I do ? He must not see me ! This way—(*Hurries on the domino and mask.*) Aid me, dear lady, to conceal

conceal myself; and excuse conduct which I cannot now explain.

LADY J. Depend upon me, madam. (*Aside*) This is as unaccountable as it is alarming!

SCENE IV. MARIA *in the back ground.* SIR GEORGE *introduced by a Footman.*

SIR G. I come, my charming Lady Jane, flying and full of business, to consult you on a thousand important affairs!

LADY J. Surely! What are they?

SIR G. Upon my soul, I don't know!

LADY J. Heyday!

SIR G. They have every one slipped my memory.

LADY J. Miraculous!

SIR G. Whenever I have the inexpressible pleasure of enjoying your smiles, I can think of nothing else.

MAR. (*Aside*) Perjured man!

LADY J. My smiles! Ha, ha, ha! What if I should happen to frown?

SIR G. Impossible! No lowering clouds of discontent dare ever shade the heavenly brightness of your brow.

MAR. (*Aside*) Oh!

LADY J. Very prettily said, upon my word. Where did you learn it?

SIR G. From you! 'Tis pure inspiration, and you are my muse.

LADY J. No, no; 'tis a flight beyond me. I love plain prose.

SIR G. So do I! A mere common place matter of fact man, I! The weather, the time of the

H

day,

day, the history of where I dined last, the names and titles of the company, the dishes brought to table, the health, sickness, deaths, births and marriages of my acquaintance, and such like toothpick topics for me! I am as literal in my narratives as any town-crier; and repeat them as often.

LADY J. Yet I should wish to talk a little common sense.

SIR G. Oh! So should I! I assure you, I am for pros and cons and whys and wherefores. Your Aristotles, and Platos, and Senecas, and Catos are my delight! I honor their precepts, venerate their cogitations, and adore the length of their beards! which luckily reminds me of the masquerade. Is my domino to your taste?

LADY J. Ha, ha, ha! Ancient sages, dominos, and taste.

SIR G. Did you not notice the colour?

LADY J. Oh! The taste of a domino is in its colour?

SIR G. Why, no: but there may be meaning.

LADY J. Explain.

SIR G. Mine is saffron.

LADY J. What of that?

SIR G. Cruel question! Hymen and his robe.

LADY J. Oh oh!

MAR. (*Aside*) She is pleased with his perfidy.

LADY J. A very significant riddle truly!

MAR. (*Advancing*) Are you so soon to be married, sir?

SIR G. Bless me, Lady Jane! What frolicksome gentleman is this? In masquerade so early, and my domino!

MAR. Permit me once more to ask, if you are soon to be married?

SIR G.

SIR G. Your question, sir, is improperly address-
ed. Put it, if you please, to that lady.

MAR. (*Aside to Sir George*) Is that the lady to
whom the question ought to be put?

SIR G. (*Aside*) What does he mean?—Will
you indulge me, sir, by taking off that mask?

MAR. No, sir.

SIR G. 'Tis mine; and I am induced to claim
it, from the great curiosity I have to see your face.

MAR. Do you not adore this lady?

SIR G. (*Aside*) An odd question!—More than
language can express!

MAR. (*Aside*) Oh, falsehood!—Then I put
myself under her protection.

SIR G. You know guardian angels when you see
them. Pray, however, let us become acquainted.

MAR. For what reason?

SIR G. 'Twould gratify me. I should like you.

MAR. Oh, no!

SIR G. I certainly should. There is something
of pathos and music in your voice, which, which—
I never heard but one to equal it.

MAR. And whose voice was that?

SIR G. Oh, that—that was a voice so ingenuous,
so affectionate, so fascinating!

MAR. But whose voice was it?

LADY J. (*Aside*) What does this mean?

MAR. Tell me, and you shall see my face.

LADY J. (*Aside*) Astonishing!

SIR G. I must not—I dare not—I shall never
hear it more!

MAR. (*Aside*) My feelings so overpower me I
shall betray myself. (*To Lady Jane*) Permit me to
retire,

LADY J. You have alarmed and strangely moved me ! I hope you will return ?

MAR. Oh yes ; and most happy to have your permission.

SIR G. Why do they whisper ? (*To Maria going*) Will you not let me know who you are ?

MAR. No.

SIR G. Why ?

MAR. Because—I am one you do not love.

[*Exit.*]

SIR G. One I do not love !

LADY J. (*Aside*) This is incomprehensible !

Re-enter MARIA hastily.

MAR. (*To Lady Jane*) Oh, madam !

LADY J. What more is the matter ?

MAR. For your life, do not mention the names of either of these gentlemen to the other !

LADY J. What gentlemen ?

MAR. He is coming ! They do not personally know each other. If they should, there would be murder ! I dare not stay. For the love of God beware !

[*Exit masked as Delaval enters.*]

S C E N E V.

SIR G. (*Calling*) Harkye, sir, come back ! My domino ! I shall want it in an hour or so—Who have we here ?

DEL. (*With much agitation of manner*) Your ladyship's very humble servant.

LADY J. Oh ! How do you do ? How do you do ? (*Aside*) Who can that lady be ? She knows them both, it seems ; and knows their rivalry !
Her

Her terror is contagious ! Is their hatred so deadly ? I shall certainly betray them to each other.

DEL. (*Aside*) What a strange behaviour she puts on ! Does she affect to overlook me ? (*Observing Sir George*) Who is this ?

LADY J. Are you just arrived ?

DEL. This very morning ; sooner I fear than—than—was desired.

LADY J. Do you think so ? (*To Sir George*) Why don't you go to Lady Vibrate ? She is waiting.

SIR G. 'Tis the fate of forty.

LADY J. What ?

SIR G. To wait. (*Aside. Eyeing Delaval*) Who can this spark be, that she wants me gone ?—Pray what is the name of the youth that has made so free with my domino and mask ?

LADY J. I really don't know.

SIR G. Don't know ?

LADY J. I can't answer questions at present. I am flurried ; out of humour.

DEL. I fear at my intrusion ?

LADY J. I wish you had come at another time.

DEL. I expected my visit would be unwelcome : let me request, however, to say a few words.

LADY J. Well, well ; another time, I tell you : when I am alone.

SIR G. (*Aside*) Oh ho !

DEL. They were meant for your private ear.

SIR G. (*Aside*) Were they so ?

DEL. (*Aside*) By her confusion and his manner, I suspect this to be the base betrayer of my sister's peace : the man whose bare image makes my heart sicken, and my blood recoil.

LADY J.

LADY J. (*Aside*) Will they neither of them go?
—Why do you loiter here, Sir Ge— (*Coughs*)

SIR G. I must stay till the gentleman brings back my domino and mask, you know. (*Aside*) I'll not leave them.

DEL. (*Aside*) I am persuaded it is he—Excuse me, sir : would you indulge me with the favour of your name ?

SIR G. My name, sir ! My name is—

LADY J. (*Aside to Sir George*) Hush ! Don't tell it !

SIR G. (*To Lady Jane*) Why not ?

LADY J. I insist upon it !

SIR G. Nay, then—My name, sir, is a very pretty name. Pray what is yours ?

DEL. (*Aside*) Yes, yes, it must be he—Have you any reason to be ashamed of it ?

SIR G. Sir ! Did you please to speak ? Upon my honor, you are a very polite pleasant person.

DEL. (*Aside*) If I should be mistaken—I acknowledge, sir, there is but one man, whose name I *do* but whose person I *do not* know, to whom that question would not have been rude in the extreme. Should you not be that man, I ask your pardon.

SIR G. Should I not ! Sir, that I may be sure I *am* not, allow me to ask his name ?

DEL. His name is—

LADY J. (*Screams and sinks on the chair*) Oh !

DEL. Good Heavens !

SIR G. What has happened ?

DEL. Are you ill ?

SIR G. Is it cramp, or spasm ?

DEL. Surely you have not broken a blood vessel ?

SIR G. Shall I run for a physician ?

LADY J. Instantly.

SIR G. I fly! Yet I must not leave you!

LADY J. No delay, if you value my life.

DEL. Your life! I will go!

LADY J. (*Detaining him*) No, no.

SIR G. I fly! I fly!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE VI. *Enter LADY JANE's woman.*

WOM. Dear! my lady, what is the matter?

LADY J. Lead me directly to my own room.

DEL. Shall I carry you?

LADY J. No: only give me your arm, and come with me. I want to talk to you. I wish to hear what you have to say. (*Aside to her woman*) When Sir George comes back, tell him I am partly recovered, but must not be disturbed. It is my positive order.

DEL. (*Aside*) What does she whisper?

LADY J. Stay—The Doctor may come in; but not Sir George. Mind, on your life, not Sir George!—Come, fir.

DEL. (*Aside*) This sudden change is mysterious. Here is concealment.

LADY J. Come, come.

[*Exeunt Delaval and Lady Jane.*]

SCENE VII.

WOM. I purtest, it has put me in such a flutter that I am quite all of a twitter!

Enter SIR GEORGE followed by DR. GOSTERMAN.

SIR G. Come along, Doctor! Make haste Where is Lady Jane?

WOM. In her own room.

SIR G.

SIR G. Is she worse ?

WOM. No, sir; much better : but she must not be disturbed.

SIR G. Nay, nay, I must see her.

WOM. Indeed, sir, I can let nobody in but the Doctor.

SIR G. Why so ? Is not the gentleman I left here now with her ?

WOM. I suppose so, sir.

SIR G. And I not admitted ?

WOM. On no account whatever.

SIR G. He allowed, and I excluded ! Indeed, I shall attend the Doctor.

WOM. Upon my honor, sir, you must not.

SIR G. Upon my honor, I will ! My rival shall not escape me !

DR. Ah ha ! De rival ! Ha, ha, ha ! Dat is coot ! De young fer dat vas mit Latty Shane vas make you shealously ? Ha, ha, ha ! Dat is coot ! Bote dat is as noting at all. I shall tell you de someting mystery. He vas no gentlemans. Ah ha ! He vas a vomans.

SIR G. A woman !

DR. Ya, fair. He vas make acquaintance mit me, und I vas make acquaintance mit him ; und he vas make faint, und I vas tie loose de neck bandt, und den ! Ah ha ! I vas discober de mans vas a vomans !

SIR G. You astonish me !

DR. Ya, fair. I vas make astonish myself.

WOM. Won't you go to my lady, Doctor ?

DR. Ya, my tear. Let me do. Latty Shane is fery pad ; und I shall af de essence, und de cream, und de balsam, und de syrup, und de electric, und de magnetic, und de mineral, und de vegetable,

table, und de air, und de earse, und de sea, und all, &c. [Exit ; gabbling.

S C E N E VIII.

SIR G. I should never have suspected a woman! A stout, tall, robust figure! And for what purpose disguise herself? That may be worth enquiry. I will wait and if possible have another look at the lady.

SCENE IX. *Enter LORD VIBRATE, and MR. THOMPSON.*

LORD V. Two hundred and forty pounds! 'Tis a very large sum, Mr. Thompson.

THOM. So large, my lord, that I have no means of paying it. I must languish out my life in a prison.

LORD V. No, Mr. Thompson, no: you shall not do that. I will—And yet—Two hundred—A prison—I don't know what to say. If I pay this money for you, I shall but encourage all around me to run in debt.

THOM. It is a favour too great for me to hope.

LORD V. You are a worthy man, and a prison is a bad place—I—you—Pray what is your opinion, Sir George? Is it not dangerous for a man to have the character of being charitable?

SIR G. No doubt, my lord! It is the very certain way for his house to be besieged by beggars!

LORD V. The master who pays the debts of one domestic makes himself the debtor of all the rest.

SIR G. He changes a set of servants into a set
I of

of duns! He first encourages them to be extravagant, and then makes it incumbent upon himself to pay for their follies and vices! He not only bribes them to be idle, and insolent, but to waste his property as well as their own!

LORD V. It is, as you say, a very serious case. I—I am sorry for your misfortune, Mr. Thompson—very sorry—but—really—

SIR G. Misfortune! What misfortune?

LORD V. He has foolishly been bound for his sister's husband; and must go to prison for the debt.

SIR G. To prison?

LORD V. You have shewn me how dangerous it would be for me to interfere.

SIR G. Very true: very true.—He has lived with your lordship several years?

LORD V. He has; and I esteem him highly.

SIR G. A worthy man, whom it would be no disgrace to call your friend?

LORD V. None. Still, however, consequences must be weighed. I must take time to consider. 'Tis folly to act in a hurry.

SIR G. Very true—caution—caution—Is it a large sum?

LORD V. No less than two hundred and forty pounds!

SIR G. Caution is a very excellent thing—Two hundred and forty—A fine virtue—Two—I would advise your lordship to it by all means—hundred and forty—(*Looks round*) Will you permit me just to write a short memorandum: a bit of a note? (*Goes to a table*) I must send to a certain place. (*Writes*) Excuse me a moment.

LORD

LORD V. What can be done in this affair, Mr. Thompson?

THOM. Nothing, my lord. I am resigned. When I assisted my brother, I did no more than my duty. Those who lock me up in a prison may, for aught I know, do theirs: yet, though they are at liberty and I shall be confined, I would neither change duties nor hearts with them. (*Going.*)

SIR G. Harkye! Harkye! Mr. Thompson! Will you just desire this to be taken as it is directed? (*Aside to him*) Don't say a word: 'tis a draft on my banker. Discharge your debt; and be silent—You are very right, my lord: we cannot be too considerate; lest, by mistaken benevolence, we should encourage vice.

THOM. Sir George! My lord!

SIR G. Why now will you not oblige me, Mr. Thompson? Pray let that be delivered as it is directed. You surely will not deny me such a favor—For you know, my lord, if we give—

THOM. Indeed, I—

SIR G. Will you begone? Will you begone? (*Pushes him kindly off.*)—If we give without—without—

LORD V. Poor fellow! I suppose he is afraid of being taken.

SIR G. Oh! Is that it?—If we give, I say, with—too—Pshaw! I have lost the thread of my argument.

LORD V. I must own, this is a dubious case. Perhaps I ought to pay the money. (*Calls*) Mr. Thompson!—I don't think I ought to let him go to prison. What shall I do, Sir George?

SIR G. Whatever your lordship thinks best.

LORD V. But there is the difficulty!—Mr. Thompson! He is gone. How foolish this is now! (*As he is going off*) Harry! Run after Mr. Thompson, and call him back. One would think a man going to prison would like me be wise enough to doubt, and take time to consider of it.
[Exit.]

SCENE X. *Enter* LADY VIBRATE.

LADY V. I assure you, Sir George, I am very angry. I have been waiting an age, expecting you would come and give your opinion on my masquerade drefs.

SIR G. Why did not your ladyship put it on?

LADY V. On, indeed? It has been on and off twenty times! I have sent it to have some alteration. Beside it is growing late: masks will be calling in on you, in their way to the Opera-house, and you not at home to receive them!

SIR G. I ask ten thousand pardons, but you know I am the most thoughtless creature on earth.

LADY V. So I would have you. Were you like the sober punctual Mr. Delaval, I should hate you. But then—

SCENE XI.

DELAVAL *returning from* LADY JANE's apartment.

LADY V. (*Aside*) Here the wretch comes!

SIR G. (*Aside*) So, so! now I shall interrogate the lady. She has a very masculine air! (*Delaval bows to Lady Vibrate*) A tolerable bow that, for a woman!

LADY V. (*Aside*) He wishes, I suppose, to sermonize

monize me: but I shall not give him an opportunity—Are you coming, Sir George?

DEL. (*Aside*) Ha!

SIR G. I will follow your ladyship in a minute.

DEL. (*Aside*) I was right! It is he!

SIR G. (*Aside*) She eyes me very ferociously!

LADY V. I shall just call in upon you: or, if not, we shall meet afterward. I expect you to be very whimsical and satiric upon all my friends; so pray put on your best humour. Grave airs, you know, are my aversion. [Exit.

S C E N E XII.

DEL. (*Aside*) That was intended for me. Now for my gentleman.

SIR G. (*Aside*) She really has a very fierce look! A kind of threatening physiognomy; and would make no bad Grenadier.

DEL. I understand, your name is Sir George Versatile?

SIR G. (*Aside*) A bass voice too!—At your service, sir; or madam; I really cannot tell which.

DEL. Cannot!

SIR G. No, I cannot upon my soul! (*Aside*) A devilish black chin!

DEL. I have an account to settle with you, sir.

SIR G. Have you? (*Aside*) What the plague can she mean?

DEL. When can I find you at leisure, and alone?

SIR G. Alone?

DEL. Yes, sir; alone.

SIR G. Must this account then be privately settled, madam?

DEL.

DEL. Madam!

SIR G. I beg your pardon! *Sir*, since you prefer it.

DEL. If you know me, sir, your insolence is but a confirmation of the baseness of your character!

SIR G. I beg a million of pardons! I really do not know you.

DEL. Then, sir, when you do, you will find cause to be a little more serious.

SIR G. (*Aside*) What a Joan of Arc it is! There is danger she should knock me down.

DEL. Be pleased to name your time.

SIR G. (*Aside*) Zounds! She insists upon a tête-à-tête!—I hope you will be kind enough to excuse me, but I am just now so pressed for time that I have not a moment to spare. Company is waiting. I must begone to the masquerade. You I presume are for the same place, and are ready dressed. I am your most obedient—

DEL. (*Seizing him*) Sir, I insist upon your naming an hour, to-morrow; and an early one.

SIR G. Why, what the plague!—Here must be some mistake! Permit me to ask, do you know Dr. Gosterman?

DEL. Yes, sir.

SIR G. Was you not just now in danger of fainting?

DEL. Faint? I faint!

SIR G. It would I think be a very extraordinary thing! But so he told me: with other particulars.

DEL. Absurd! Dr. Gosterman has not seen me for several months.

SIR G. He said, sir, you were a woman; and perhaps,

perhaps, from that error, I may have unconsciously provoked you to behaviour which would else have been rather strange. Have I given you any other offence?

DEL. Yes, fir; a mortal one.

SIR G. Mortal!

DEL. And mortal must be the atonement.

SIR G. If so, the sooner the better. Let it be immediately.

DEL. No. I have serious concerns to settle. So have you! 'Tis time you should think of things very different from masquerading. Name your hour to-morrow morning; then, take an enemy's advice, retire to your closet, and make your will.

SIR G. To whom am I indebted for this high menace, and this haughty warning? Your name, fir?

DEL. That you shall know when next we meet: not before.

SIR G. What age are you, fir?

DEL. Age!

SIR G. Such peremptory heroes are not usually long lived.

DEL. You are right, fir; my life is probably doomed to be short. But this is trifling. Name your hour.

SIR G. At ten to-morrow morning.

DEL. The very time I could wish. I will be with you at your own house, inform you who I am, and, then—

SIR G. So be it.—

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE

SCENE XIII. *Changes to the house of SIR GEORGE. A suite of apartments richly decorated and numerous masks: some dancing; others passing and repassing.*

SIR GEORGE and LADY VIBRATE advance, unmasked.

LADY V. What is the matter with you, Sir George? You are suddenly become as dull and almost as intolerable as my lord himself.

SIR G. I own, I had something on my spirits. But it is gone. Your ladyship's vivacity is an antidote to splenetic fits.

LADY V. Oh, if you are subject to fits of the spleen, I renounce you.

SIR G. No, no! Heigho! Ha, ha, ha! Let me go merrily down the dance of life!

LADY V. Ay! or I will not be your partner.

SIR G. As for recollections, retrospective anxieties, and painful thoughts, I I I hate them. They shall not trouble me. For if a man, you know, were to be sprung on a mine to-morrow, ha, ha, ha! it were folly to let that trouble him to-day.

LADY V. Sprung on a mine? You talk wildly!

SIR G. True. I am a wild unaccountable non descript. I am any thing, every thing, and soon may be—

LADY V. What?

SIR G. Nothing. Strange events are possible; and possible events are strange.

LADY V. Come, come, cast off this disagreeable humour; and join the masks.

SIR G. With all my heart. A mask is an excellent

cellent utensil; and may be worn with a naked face.

LADY V. (*Retiring*) Why don't you come? You used to be all compliance.

SIR G. So I fear I always shall be. 'Tis my worst virtue. Call it a vice, if you please; and perhaps it is even then my worst.

LADY V. I really do not comprehend you.

SIR G. No wonder. Man is an incomprehensible animal! But no matter for that. We will be merry still say I—at least till to-morrow.

LADY V. (*Joins the masks*) Yonder is Lady Jane.

S C E N E XIV.

SIR G. Nay then, I am on the wing!

MARIA (*Advancing*) Whither?

SIR G. Ah! Have I found you again? So much the better! I have been thinking of you this half hour.

MAR. Ay? That must have been a prodigious effort!

SIR G. What?

MAR. To think of one person for so great a length of time.

SIR G. True. Were you my bitterest enemy, you could not have uttered a more galling truth. I am glad I have met with you, however.

MAR. So am I. 'Tis my errand here.

SIR G. You now, I hope, will let me see your face?

MAR. I might, perhaps, were it but possible to see your heart.

SIR G. No, no: that cannot be. I have no heart.

MAR. I am sorry for it!

K

SIR G

SIR G. So am I. But come, I wish to be better acquainted with you.

MAR. And I wish you to be better acquainted with yourself. You know not half your own good qualities.

SIR G. Ha, ha, ha! My good qualities? Heigho!

MAR. Your fame is gone abroad! Your gallantry, your free humour, your frolics in England and Italy, your—Apropos: I am told, Lady Jane is captivated by the ardour and delicacy of your passion! Is it true?

SIR G. Are you an inquisitor?

MAR. Are you afraid of inquisitors?

SIR G. Yes.

MAR. I believe you.

SIR G. You may. Keep me no longer in this suspense. Let me know who you are?

MAR. An old acquaintance.

SIR G. Of mine?

MAR. Of one who was formerly your friend.

SIR G. Whom do you mean?

MAR. You must have been a man of uncommon worth; for I have heard him bestow such praises upon you that my heart has palpitated if your name was but mentioned!

SIR G. Of whom are you talking?

MAR. Lord! that you should be so forgetful! That can only have happened since you became a person of fashion: for no man once remembered his friends better. It is true, they were then useful to you.

SIR G. Sir, I—Be warned! Pursue this no farther.

MAR. You little suspected at that time you were on the eve of being a wealthy baronet. Oh no!

no! And to see how kind and grateful you were to those who loved you! No one would have believed you could so soon have become a perfect man of the mode; and with so polite and easy an indifference so entirely have forgotten all your old acquaintance! I dare say you scarcely remember the late Colonel Delaval.

SIR G. Sir!

MAR. His daughter too has utterly slipped your memory?

SIR G. I insist on knowing who you are!

MAR. How different it was when, your merit neglected, your spirits depressed, and your poverty despised, you groaned under the oppression of an unjust and selfish world! How did your drooping spirits revive by the fostering smiles of the man who first noticed you, took you to his house and heart, and adopted you as his son! Poor Maria! Silly girl, to love as she did! Where is she?

SIR G. This is not to be endured!

MAR. What was her offence? You became a baronet! Ay! True, that was her crime. Yet, when your fortunes were low, it was not imputed to you as guilt.

SIR G. (*Aside.*) Damnation!

MAR. Are your new friends more affectionate than your old? Fortune smiles, and so do they. Poor Maria! Has Lady Jane ever heard her name? Will you invite her to your wedding? (*Her voice continually faltering.*) Do. She should have been your bride: then let her be your bride maid—She is greatly altered—She will be less beautiful—now—than her fair rival. Her birth is not quite so high—but—if a—heart—a heart—

a heart—(*Struggling with her feelings sinks into Sir George's arms, and her mask falls off*)

SIR G. Heavens and earth! 'Tis she! Help!
'Tis Maria! Who waits?

SCENE XV. *Enter* LADY JANE.

LADY J. What is the matter?

SIR G. Help! Help!—Salts! Hartshorn!
—Water! Help!

LADY J. Bless me! This lady again.

SIR G. Is she then known to you?

LADY J. No! Who is she?

SIR G. Quick! Quick!

LADY J. Nay but, tell me?

SIR G. I cannot! Must not!

LADY J. Must not?

SIR G. Dare not!—She revives; and, to my confusion, will soon tell you herself. Maria! Are you better, Maria?

MAR. I am very faint.

LADY J. My carriage is at the door. Will you trust yourself to me?

MAR. Oh yes. I am weak—Very weak, and very foolish! But I shall not long disturb your happiness. I hope soon to be past that.

SIR G. Past! Oh Maria!—I—have no utterance—Lady Jane, you will presently know of me what to know of myself is—Oh!—No matter. Not then for my sake but for pity, for the love of suffering virtue, be careful of this lady; whom when you know, as soon you must, you will despise and abhor the lunatic, the wretch, that could—Maria—I—I—

[*Exit abruptly.*]

SCENE

SCENE XVI. *Enter DELAVAL.*

DEL. What is the matter? Any accident? Was not that Sir George?—Good God! My sister!

LADY J. Your sister!

DEL. How comes this? Why this dress? And with that apostate! that wretch! Speak, Maria!

MAR. I cannot.

LADY J. Mr. Delaval, be more temperate. Your sister's spirits and health ought not to be trifled with by your violence. I do not know, though I think I guess, her story. I hope you have a brother's tenderness for her?

DEL. That shall be shortly seen. A few hours will shew how dear she is to my heart.

LADY J. I fear you cherish bad passions: such as I never can love, and never will share.

DEL. Well, well, Lady Jane, that is not to be argued now. I am a man, and subject to the mistakes of man. There are feelings which can and feelings which cannot be subdued. I must run my course, and take all consequences.

MAR. Oh God! In what will they end?

LADY J. No more of this, Mr. Delaval. Come with me: lead your sister to my carriage. She shall be under my care. She can inspire those sympathies which your too stubborn temper seems to despise.

DEL. Indeed, indeed, you wrong me! [*Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT IV.

ACT

ACT V.

SCENE I. MARIA in her proper dress,
LADY JANE and LUCY, FOOTMEN waiting.
Breakfast equipage on the table.

LADY JANE.

REMOVE those things. We have done. [*Exeunt Footmen.*]

MAR. What is it o'clock?

LU. Just struck ten, ma'am.

LADY J. Lady Vibrate is a sad rake! She did not leave the masquerade till five this morning.

MAR. And Sir George not there!

LADY J. After the discovery of last night, could you suppose he would be seen revelling at such a place?

MAR. I dread another and more horrible cause! My brother!

LADY J. Mr. Delaval, you know, slept in this house.

MAR. But he has been out these two hours!

LU. What then, ma'am? Is not Mr. Williams on the watch? You know, ma'am, you may trust Mr. Williams with your life.

MAR. If all were safe, he would be back.

LADY J. Pray calm your spirits.

MAR. Nay, nay, but Mr. Williams must have been here before this, if something fatal had not happened!

LU. I am sure, ma'am, you frighten me to death!

LADY J. (*Aside*) Her terrors are but too well founded!

MAR. (*Footsteps without*) What noise is that?

LU.

LU. Bless me!

LADY J. See who it is!

LU. (*After opening the door*) Law, ma'am! I declare it is Mr. Williams!

SCENE II. *Enter WILLIAMS.*

LU. Well, Mr. Williams! Every thing is right: is not it? All is as it should be?

WILL. That is more than I know.

MAR. Why then the worst is past.

WILL. No, ma'am: I can't say that, either.

LADY J. Nay but, what news do you bring? Speak.

WILL. Why you know my master last night made enquiries how to find the chambers of Counsellor Demur: so, when he went out this morning, I observed your directions and followed him. He went to the Counsellor's, in Lincoln's Inn; and there I left him and hurried away to Sir George's, to enquire and hear all I could: though it was rather unlucky that I was not acquainted in the family.

LADY J. Did not you make use of my name?

WILL. Oh yes, my lady. Beside, servants your ladyship knows are not so suspicious as their masters: they soon become friendly together: so in five minutes Sir George's valet and I were on as intimate a footing as we could wish.

MAR. And what did he say? Tell me.

WILL. Why, ma'am, he said that Sir George did not leave his own house last night, after the fainting of the young gentleman.

LU. That was you, you know, ma'am.

WILL. And, what is more, that he did not go to bed; but walked up and down the room till daylight

daylight in the morning; and then called I don't know how often to warn the servants that he should not be at home to any body whatever, except to a strange gentleman.

MAR. My brother!

WILL. Why yes, ma'am, according to the description, it could be nobody else.

LADY J. And at what hour was Mr. Delaval to be there?

WILL. (*Aside*) Zooks! I forgot to ask—That, that, my lady, I did not learn. So, this being all the servants told me, I ran post haste to make my report to you.

MAR. The worst I foreboded will happen!

LADY J. What can be done?

WILL. Perhaps it will be best for me to go back to Sir George's, wait for the arrival of my master, and, if he should come, hasten away as fast as I can to inform you of it.

LU. That is a good thought, Mr. Williams! Is not it, madam? A very good thought, indeed! Don't you think it is, my lady?

LADY J. I know not what we can do better.

MAR. Nay but, while Williams is bringing us the intelligence, every thing we most dread may happen.

LU. Dear! So it may!

WILL. Suppose then, madam, I should stay at my post; and dispatch Sir George's valet to you with the news?

LU. Well, that is the best thought of all! I am sure you will own it is, madam.

MAR. I know not what to think.

LADY J. We must resolve; or, while we are deliberating—

MAR.

MAR. Merciful God! Run, Williams! Fly!
Save my brother! Save Sir George!

LADY J. Succeed but in this, and command all
we have to give.

WILL. I will do my best.

LU. That I am sure he will. [Exeunt.

SCENE III. *Changes to the house of SIR GEORGE.*

—SIR GEORGE *walking in perturbation of mind.*
After some time he looks at his watch.

SIR G. He will soon be here—Five minutes—
but five minutes and then—(*Walks again, throws
himself on a sofa, takes up a book, tosses it away
and rises*) What is man's first duty? To be happy.
Short sighted fool! The happiness of this hour
is the misery of the next! (*Again walks and looks at
his watch*) What is life? A tiffue of follies!
Inconsistencies! Joys that make reason weep,
and sorrows at which wisdom smiles. Pshaw!
There is not between ape and oyster so ridiculous
or so wretched a creature as man. (*Walks*) Oh
Maria! (*Again consulting his watch*) I want but
a few seconds. My watch perhaps is too fast.
(*Rings*)

Enter Footman.

SIR G. Has nobody yet been here?

FOOT. No, sir.

SIR G. 'Tis the time to a minute. (*Loud knock-
ing*) Fly! If it be the person I have described,
admit him. [Exit Footman.

SIR G. Now let the thunder strike!

L.

SCENE.

SCENE IV. DELAVAL *introduced. They salute:*

SIR G. Good morning, sir!

DEL. You recollect me?

SIR G. Perfectly.

DEL. 'Tis well.

SIR G. I have been anxious for your coming. Your menace lives in my memory; and I shall be glad to know the name of him who has threatened such mortal enmity.

DEL. A little patience will be necessary. I must preface my proceedings with a short story.

SIR G. I shall be all attention. Please to be seated. Wave ceremony, and to the subject—
(*They sit*) Now, sir.

DEL. About six years ago, a certain youth came up from college; poor, and unprotected. He was a scholar, pleasing in manner, warm and generous of temper, of a respectable family, and seemed to possess the germ of every virtue.

SIR G. Well, sir.

DEL. Hear me on: my praises will not be tedious. Chance made him known to a man who desired to cherish his good qualities; and the purse, the experience, and the power of his benefactor, such as they were, he profited by to the utmost. Received as a son, he soon became dear to the family: but most dear to the daughter of his friend; whose tender age and glowing affections made her apt to admire the virtues she heard her father so ardently praise, and encourage. You are uneasy?

SIR G. Be pleased to continue.

DEL. The assiduities of the youth to gain her heart

heart were unabating ; and his pretensions, poor and unknown as he then was, were not rejected. The noble nature of his friend scorned to make his poverty his crime. Why do you bite your lip ? Was it not generous ?

SIR G. Sir !

DEL. (*Firmly*) Was it not ?

SIR G. Certainly ! Nothing could—equal the—generosity.

DEL. The health of his benefactor was declining fast ; and the only thing required of the youth was that he should qualify himself for the cares of life, by some profession. He therefore entered a student in the Temple ; and the means were furnished by his protector, till the end was obtained. Was not this friendship ?

SIR G. It was.

DEL. The lady, almost a child when first he knew her, increased in grace and beauty faster than in years. Sweetness and smiles played upon her countenance. She was the delight of her friends, the admiration of the world, and the coveted of every eye. Lovers of fortune and fashion contended for her hand : but she had bestowed her heart—had bestowed it on a—Sit still, sir ; I shall soon have done. I am coming to the point. Five years elapsed ; during which the youth received every kindness friendship could afford, and every proof chaste affection had to give. These he returned with promises and protestations that seemed too vast for his heart. I would say for his tongue—Are you unwell, sir ?

SIR G. Go on with your tale.

DEL. His benefactor, feeling the hand of death steal on, was anxious to see the two persons dearest

to his heart happy before he expired; and the marriage was determined on, the day fixed, and the friends of the family invited. The intended bridegroom appeared half frantic with his approaching bliss. Now, sir, mark his proceeding. In this short interval, by sudden and unexpected deaths, he becomes the heir to a title and large estate. Well! Does he not fly to the arms of his languishing friend? Does he not pour his new treasures and his transports into the lap of love? Coward and monster!

SIR G. (*Both starting up*) Sir!

DEL. Viler than words can paint! Having robbed a family of honor, a friend of peace, and an angel of every human solace, he fled, like a thief, and concealed himself from immediate contempt and vengeance in a foreign country. But contempt and vengeance have at length overtaken him: they beset him: they face him at this instant. The friend he wronged is dead: but the son of that friend lives, and I am he.

SIR G. 'Tis as I thought!

DEL. You are—I will not defile my lips by telling you what you are.

SIR G. I own that what I have done—

DEL. Forbear to interrupt me, sir. You have nothing to plead, and much to hear. First say, did my sister, by any improper conduct, levity of behaviour, or fault or vice whatever, give you just cause to abandon her?

SIR G. None! None! Her purity is only exceeded by her love.

DEL. Then how, barbarian, how had you the heart to disgrace the family and endanger the life of a woman whose sanctified affection would have embraced

embraced you in poverty, pestilence, or death; and who, had she possessed empires, would have bestowed them with an imperial affection?

SIR G. Sir, if you ask, Have I committed errors? call them crimes if you will, Yes. If you demand, Will I justify them? No. If you require me to atone for them, here is my heart: you have wrongs to revenge, strike; and, if you can, inflict a pang greater than any it yet has known.

DEL. Justice is not to be disarmed by being braved. To the question. It can be no part of your intention, and certainly not of mine, that you should marry my sister. Something very different must be done.

SIR G. What? Name it?

DEL. You must give me an acknowledgment, written and signed by yourself, that you have basely and most dishonorably injured, insulted and betrayed Maria Delaval: and this paper, immediately as I leave your house, I shall publish in every possible way; till my sister shall be so appeased, and honor so satiated, that vengeance itself shall cry, Hold!

SIR G. Written by me! Published! No. I will sign no such paper.

DEL. So I supposed; and the alternative follows. Here I am: nor will I quit you, go where you will, till you shall consent to retire with me to some place from which one of us must never return. Should I be the victor, flight, banishment from my native country, and the bitterest recollections of the villanies of man, must be the fate of me and my sister. If I fall, you then may triumph and she languish and die unrevenged. This,
or

or the written acknowledgment. Consider, and chuse.

SIR G. What can I answer? The paper you shall not have. My life you are welcome to: take it.

DEL. Have you not brought disgrace enough on my family? Would you make me an assassins? My sister and my father loved you. Let me, if possible, feel some little return of respect for you.

SIR G. Having wronged the sister, would you have me murder the brother? Already the most guilty of men, would you make me the worst of fiends? Though an enemy, be a generous one.

DEL. Plausible sophist! The paper, sir: or, man to man and arm to arm, close the scene of my dishonor, or your own. The written acknowledgment. Determine. (*Walks away and views the pictures*)

SIR G. (*Apart*) Why, ay! 'Tis come home! I have sought it, deserved it, 'tis fallen, and the rock must crush the reptile! — Then welcome ruin. The sword must decide. (*Goes to take his sword, but stops*) The sword? What! Betray the sister and assassinate the brother? Oh God! And such a brother! Stern, but noble minded: indignant of injury, peerless in affection, and proud of a sister whom the world might worship; but whom I, worthless wretch, in levity and pride of heart, have abandoned. (*Aloud*) Mr. Delaval!

DEL. Have you resolved to sign?

SIR G. Hear me.

DEL. The written acknowledgment!

SIR G. My behaviour to your sister is—what I cannot endure to name—'Tis hateful! 'Tis—in-famous!

famous! My obligations to your most excellent father, the respect you have inspired me with, and my love for Maria—

DEL. Insolent! Insufferable meanness! The paper, Sir!

SIR G. Angry though you are, Mr. Delaval, you must hear me. I say, my love, my adoration of Maria has but increased my guilt. It has made me dread her contempt. I durst not face the angel whom I had so deeply injured.

DEL. Artifice! Evasion! Cowardice!—Your signature!

SIR G. (*Snatching up his sword from the table*) You shall have it. Follow me.

DEL. Fear me not.

SIR G. (*Stopping short*) Hold, Mr. Delaval. Justice is on your side. If your firmness be not a savage spirit of revenge, if you do not thirst for blood, you will feel my only resource will be to fall on your sword. I cannot lift my arm against you.

DEL. Then sign the acknowledgment.

SIR G. Can you in the spirit even of an enemy ask it? Do you not already despise me enough? Think for a moment: am I the only man that ever erred? Is it so wonderful that a giddy youth, whose habitual failing was compliance, by sudden accident elevated to the pinnacle of fortune, surrounded by proud and selfish relations of whose approbation I was vain, is it so strange that I should be overpowered by their dictates, and yield to their intreaties? Your friendship or my death is now the only alternative. Suppose the latter: will it honor you among men? At the man of blood the heart of man revolts! Will it endear you to Maria?

Maria? Kind forgiving angel, and hateful to myself as her affection makes me, I last night found that affection still as strong, still as pure, as in the first hour of our infant loves. Lady Jane—

DEL. Forbear to name her! 'Tis profanation from your lips! No more casuistry! No subterfuge! The paper!

SIR G. Can no motives—

DEL. None!

SIR G. My future life, my soul, shall be devoted to Maria.

DEL. The paper!

SIR G. Obdurate man! (*Reflects a moment*) You shall have it. (*Goes to the table to write, during which Delaval remains deep in thought and much agitated*) Here, sir! since you will not be generous, let me be just. 'Tis proper I remove every taint of suspicion from the deeply wronged Maria.

DEL. (*Reads with a faltering voice*) “ I George
“ Versatile, once poor and dependent, since vain
“ fickle and faithless, do under my hand acknow-
“ ledge I have perfidiously—broken my pledged
“ promise—to the most deserving—lovely—and
(*Begins in much agitation to tear the paper.*)

SIR G. Mr. Delaval?

DEL. Damn it—I can't—I can't speak. Here! Here! (*Striking his bosom.*)

SIR G. Mr. Delaval?

DEL. My brother!

SIR G. (*Falls on his neck*) Can it be? My friend!

DEL. This stubborn temper—always in extremes! The tiger, or the child.

SIR G. Oh no! 'Twas not to be forgiven! Best of men!

DEL.

DEL. Well, well: we are friends.

SIR G. Everlastingly! Brothers!

DEL. Yes; brothers.

SCENE V. *Enter WILLIAMS in great haste.*

WILL. Sir!

DEL. How now?

WILL. I beg your pardon, but Lady Jane and your sister are below. They insist on coming up, and the servants are afraid to—

SIR G. Maria! Let us fly! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. *The apartments of LORD VIBRATE.*

LADY VIBRATE and the DOCTOR.

DR. Ya, my coot laty: dat vas efery vordt so true as vat I say. I vas discober it vas a vomans; und Sair Shorge, und my Laty Shane, und de waiting vomans vas discober to me all as vat I say more.

LADY V. Ay, ay! That was the reason Sir George was not at the masquerade.

DR. Ya, my coot laty.

LADY V. I observed he was in a strange moody humour.

DR. My Lordt Fiprate vas fery mosh amazement, ven I vas make him discober all as vat I vas make discober mit my coot laty.

LADY V. Sir George has behaved very improperly.

SCENE VII. *Enter LORD VIBRATE.*

LORD V. So, so, so! All I foreboded has come to pass! The day is slipped away, a new one is
M here,

here, and every possibility of recovering the estate is gone!

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha!

LORD V. Do you laugh?

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha! I do, indeed!

LORD V. Is your daughter's loss the subject of your mirth?

LADY V. Ha, ha, ha! No, no; not her loss, but your positive determination to prove I did not know you! Ha, ha, ha! When I told you that even that motive would not be strong enough, how you stormed! "But it will, my lady! But it won't, my lord! I say it will, my lady! I say it won't, my lord!" Ha, ha, ha! Will you believe that I know you now?

LORD V. What shall I do? Advise me, Doctor.

DR. I vas advice, my coot Lordt, dat you shall do efery ting as vat you please.

LADY V. Ay, think: ask advice. Ha, ha, ha! Now that you can do nothing, the enquiry will be very amusing.

SCENE VIII. *Enter THOMPSON.*

LORD V. Well, Thompson, what says Counsellor Demur? Has the time absolutely elapsed?

THOM. Absolutely, my lord.

LADY V. How wisely your lordship doubts, before you decide! Hay, Doctor?

THOM. I have good news, nevertheless.

LORD V. Good news? Speak! Of what kind?

THOM. The honesty of the opposite party.

LORD V. What, the holder of the land?

THOM. Yes, my lord.

LORD V. Which way? Explain!

THOM.

THOM. He has engaged to Mr. Demur, I being present, that, if your lordship will only shew the legality of your late title, he will resign the estate.

LORD V. Is it possible ?

LADY V. It cannot be ! The last purchaser is in India.

THOM. The last purchaser is dead ; and it has descended to one whom you, my lord and lady, little suspect to be its possessor.

LORD V. Who ?

LADY V. Who ?

THOM. Mr. Delaval.

LADY V. Mr. Delaval !

LORD V. Mr. Delaval resign it on exhibiting the legality of my title ?

THOM. He will, my lord.

LORD V. Did he make no conditions ?

THOM. None.

LORD V. What, did he not mention Lady Jane ?

THOM. Her name did escape his lips ; but rising passion, and, if I rightly read his heart, emotions of the most delicate sensibility immediately closed them : as if he would not endure the love he bore her to be profaned by any the slightest semblance of barter and sale.

LORD V. What do you say to that, Lady Vibrate ? What do you say to that ?

LADY V. The proceeding is honorable, I own.

LORD V. Did I not always tell you Mr. Delaval was a man of honor ?

LADY V. You tell me, my lord ? Why you were going to challenge him yesterday morning !

LORD V. He is no such weathercock as your favorite, Sir George.

LADY V. You mistake : Sir George is no favorite of mine. Is he, Doctor ?

DR. Dat vas all yust as vat you say, my coot laty.

LORD V. What, he did not come to make a buffoon of himself, for your diversion, at the masquerade last night ! Hay, Doctor ?

DR. Dat vas all yust as vat you say, my coot lordt.

LADY V. His perfidious treatment of Miss Delaval is unpardonable.

DR. Dat vas pad ! Fery pad, inteet !

LORD V. Ay ay ! He has plenty of words, but he has no heart.

DR. Dat is pad ! Fery pad inteet !

THOM. Pardon me, my lord : Sir George may have committed mistakes, but to the goodness of his heart I am a witness.

LADY V. You ?

LORD V. How so ?

THOM. By his benevolence, I was yesterday relieved from the disgrace and the horrors of a prison.

LORD V. Indeed !

LADY V. Which way ?

THOM. He paid a debt, which, had I been confined, I never could have discharged ; and, for this unexpected act of humanity, he would not suffer so much as my thanks.

LORD V. Did Sir George pay the two hundred and forty pounds, Mr. Thompson ?

THOM. The note, which he pretended to write and send by me, was a draft on his banker for three hundred.

LORD V. Why he confirmed all my arguments against it ; and added twice as many of his own.

DR. Sair Shorge vas alway make agréable. Dat vas his yay.

LADY V.

LADY V. I own, however, I am still more surprised at the unexampled generosity of Mr. Delaval.

SCENE IX. *Enter WILLIAMS.*

LADY V. Where is your master, Mr. Williams?

WILL. They are all coming, my lady.

LADY V. Who is coming?

WILL. Mr. Delaval, Lady Jane, Miss Delaval, and Sir George. There has been sad work! But it is all over, and they are now so happy! Here they are!

SCENE THE LAST. *Enter Mr. DELAVAL leading LADY JANE, and SIR GEORGE with MARIA, followed by LUCY.*

LORD V. Mr. Delaval, I have great obligations to you. Thompson has been telling me of your disinterested equity.

DEL. The obligation, my lord, was mine. Your lordship well knows that the first of obligations is to be just.

LORD V. Well, well; but the estate you are so willing to resign will still, I hope, be yours.

DEL. Nay, my lord.

LORD V. Dubious as all things are, that is a subject on which I protest I do not believe I shall ever have any doubts. What say you, Lady Jane? (*Irony*) But now I have my doubts again.

LADY J. (*Eagerly*) What doubts, my lord?

LORD V. I doubt whether you understand me?

LADY J. Would your lordship teach me to dissemble?

LORD V. Um—I doubt whether that would be much for your good.

DEL.

DEL. I hope Lady Vibrate will not oppose our union?

LADY V. No, Mr. Delaval. Your last generous action has charmed me; and Sir George—

SIR G. Has declined in your good opinion. But you cannot think so ill of me as I do of myself; and, if ever again I should recover my own self respect, I shall be indebted for it to this best of men, and to this most incomparable and affectionate of women!

MAR. My present joys are inexpressible!

DEL. Which my impetuous indignation threatened for ever to destroy. (*Comes forward*) How dangerous are extremes! Sometimes we doubt, and indecision is our bane: at others, hurried away by the sudden impulse of passion, our course is marked with misery. One man is too compliant: another too intractable. Yet happiness is the aim of all. Since then all are so liable to be misled, let gentle forbearance, indulgent thoughts, and a mild forgiving spirit, be ever held as the sacred duties of man to man.

[EXEUNT OMNES.]

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY MR. QUICK, AND MRS. MATTOCKS.

(As Mr Pope concludes and is preparing to bow to the audience, Mr Quick with some importance comes forward.)

Mr. Q. HOLD, Mr. Pope! Please to give place to me:

'Tis my part to conclude the comedy.

Hem! Hem! *(Begins a grave and stately bow.)*

Mrs. M. *(Eagerly advancing.)* Yours, Mr. Quick? I beg you'll hold your tongue!

All Epilogues of right to me belong.

You tease the audience, fir; and put me out.

Mr. Q. Tease? Humph! Permit me, madam, there to doubt.

Mrs. M. Your part is over, now; your *doubts* are ended.

Mr. Q. Would that they were! *(To the audience.)* Say, friends, are you offended?

Or are you pleas'd? Which way do you incline?

The author has his doubts; and I have mine;

Pronounce our doom: relieve us from our pain!

Mrs. M. *(Laughs.)* Look at those dismal features and refrain.

Mr. Q. Should it be fatal, hear, oh hear, our pleadings!

Grant an arrest of judgment: stay proceedings:

I move the court——

Mrs. M. You move? Stand back! I'll wait no longer.

I tell you once again I am th' Epilogue monger.

(Surveys him and laughs)

Mr. Q. What do you laugh at?

Mrs. M. You! There's reason ample!

Mr. Q. *(Retiring.)* I beg, firs, you'll not follow her example.

Mrs. M.

Mrs. M. The hypocrite ! Well, well, I'm glad he's gone :

For now the *pleadings* will be all my own.

The author hopes I'll advocate his play.

Heaven help the man ! What would he have me say ?

(*Recollecting.*)

Something about the anxious months he spent,

(*Pomposly.*)

His garret traversing his brain intent

On this, and that, and t'other ; action, plot,

Wit, humour, passion ; and the lord knows what !

And tell how difficult it was to write

The charming nonsense you have heard to-night ! —

Poor fool ! When he suppos'd his work complete,

He thought he had achiev'd a mighty feat !

Nay he protests that earth and heaven he'd move,

Could he but pen what you might well approve.

The man speaks fair ; is tolerably civil :

Then, since an author's only a poor devil,

Doom him to what will give us all delight :

Make him repeat his follies every night.

THE END.

Holcroft -
He's much to
blame

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